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TOKYOPOP

AKASHI

Still Sick Volume 2

Akashi

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Still Sick

［スティルシック］

BLADE COMICS pixiv

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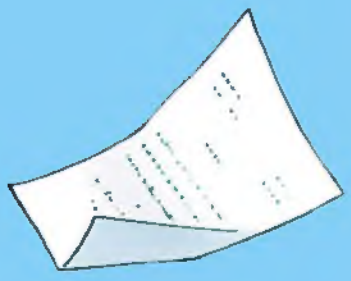
Presented by AKASHI



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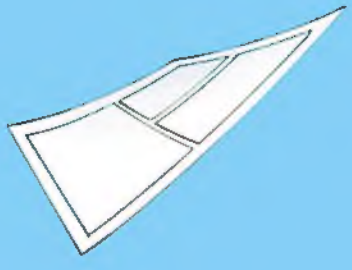
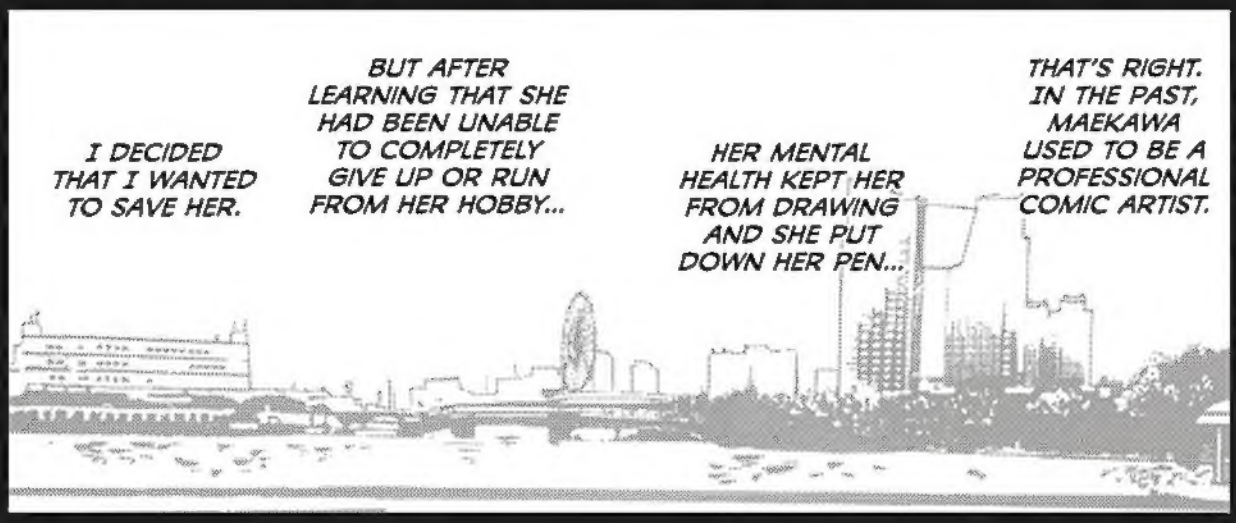
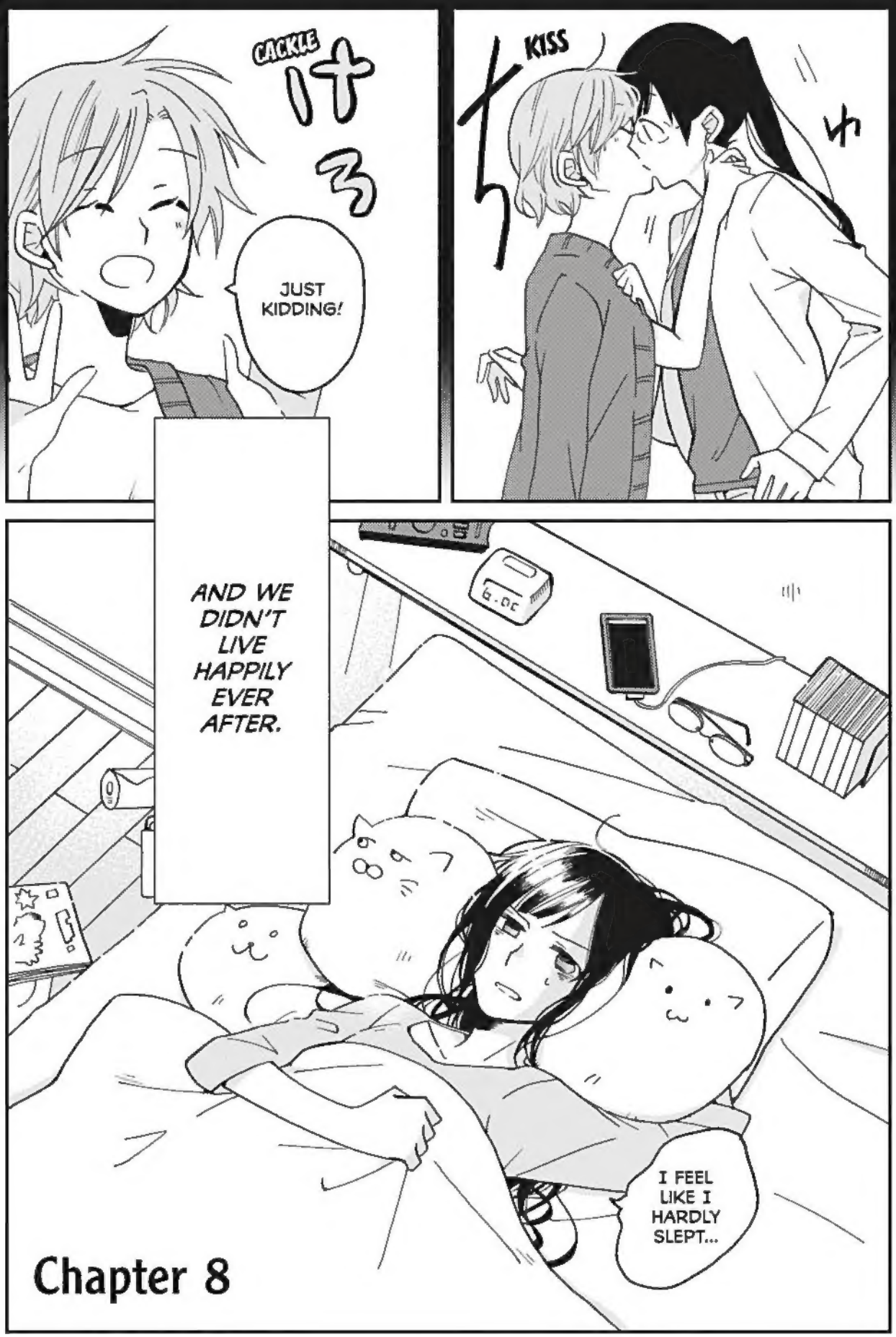


MAEKAWA FROM GENERAL AFFAIRS FOUND OUT THAT I'M A HUGE NERD...
I'M MAKOTO SHIMIZU, 29 YEARS OLD.
B-26
AFTER THAT, SHE STARTED POKING HER NOSE INTO MY BUSINESS.
?
オーウー!!
FWAP
THIS WOMAN, MAEKAWA...
WHAT'S "YURI"?
STARE
IS THAT FUN?
I THOUGHT SHE WAS INTERESTED IN THE FACT THAT I DRAW COMICS...
BUT IN ACTUALITY, SHE IS...
IS VERY STRANGE.

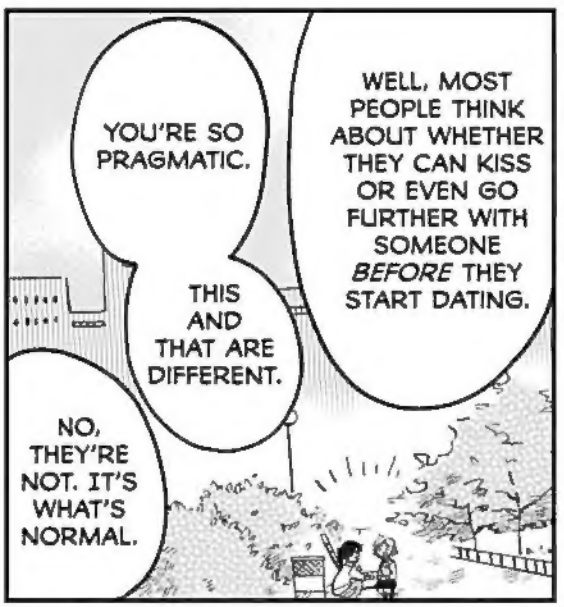
*IN JAPAN, MANGA CREATORS ARE REFERRED TO AS "SENSEI," MUCH LIKE TEACHERS AND DOCTORS.




CACKLE
けけ
JUST KIDDING!
KISS
ちゅ
AND WE DIDN'T LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER.
I FEEL LIKE I HARDLY SLEPT...
Chapter 8

*A TYPE OF ROLLED JAPANESE OMELET

...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO UPSET.
THAT WASN'T ACTUALLY YOUR FIRST KISS, WAS IT?
OH...
BUT WHAT ABOUT KIDOGUCHI-SAN?
HER EX-BOYFRIEND.
UM...
KIDO-GUCHI KNEW...
HOW MUCH I WORRIED ABOUT...
NOT BEING ABLE TO ACT LIKE A NORMAL GIRL.
HE SAID HE'D WAIT UNTIL I FELT LIKE IT...
誠実
HONEST


YOU'RE SO PRAGMATIC.
THIS AND THAT ARE DIFFERENT.
NO, THEY'RE NOT. IT'S WHAT'S NORMAL.
WELL, MOST PEOPLE THINK ABOUT WHETHER THEY CAN KISS OR EVEN GO FURTHER WITH SOMEONE *BEFORE* THEY START DATING.

I'M EMBARRASSED.
STOP. THAT'S GROSS.
I'M SORRY. I STOLE A KISS NOT KNOWING HOW MUCH YOU VALUED THEM...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT "NORMAL" IS.
I WON'T UNDERSTAND NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY TO ME.

...
I'M REALLY SORRY.

...
IT'S FINE.
I WENT TOO FAR.
I WAS ESPECIALLY WRONG TO DO IT TO SOMEONE WHO WAS TEASED FOR LIKING GIRLS.
YEAH.
THIS DISCUSSION IS OVER!
LET'S EAT.
REALLY?
WHAT?

!
YOU...
WHAT IS IT?
ALSO, PLEASE PULL ME UP.
PLEASE SHAKE MY HAND TO PROVE THAT WE'VE MADE UP SO THERE'LL BE NO FUTURE TROUBLE.
STAND UP ON YOUR OWN!
PULL
THAT HURTS.
DON'T ACT SO SPOILED!

SQUEEZE
I DON'T CARE ABOUT ALL THAT.

THANK YOU.
I'LL STILL BE HERE SUPPORTING YOU, SO FOCUS ON YOUR COMIC.

AKANE...
WOULDN'T YOU BE HAPPY WITH ANYONE?
SOMETIME YOU ACT PRETTY COLD TO ME.

I'VE ALWAYS...
WANTED A REPLACEMENT THAT WOULD FILL IN THE PARTS OF ME I WASN'T SATISFIED WITH.
I KNEW IT MADE ME A WRETCHED PERSON.
I COULD NEVER TRULY LOVE THE PEOPLE WHO SHOWED AN INTEREST IN ME.
HA HA...
YOU JUST WANT A REPLACEMENT FOR SOMETHING YOU CAN'T HAVE.
I CAN'T COMMIT TO THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP THAT'S EASILY RUINED...
BY MY, "ACTING COLD."

HMM?
MAEKAWA.
GIVE ME YOUR TAMAGOYAKI.
WHAT'S UP?
YUM.
I DON'T WANT...
TO HAVE THAT SORT OF RELATIONSHIP WITH SHIMIZU-SAN.

THIS INTERRUPT PROCESS IS THE CAUSE.
YOU SHOULD MAKE IT INTO AN EXCLUSIVE CONTROL.
UNDERSTOOD.
OH, I GET IT.
HUH?
IS THERE A BETTER WAY TO DEBUG IT?
STRETCH
YOU JUST HAVE TO FIDDLE AROUND WITH THE PROGRAM UNTIL YOU FIGURE IT OUT.
SHE'S THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO DOESN'T GIVE VERY GOOD ADVICE...

IT'S EASY TO FALL IN TRAPS WHEN YOU MAKE ASSUMPTIONS.
AH...
BASICALLY, YOU HAVE TO DOUBT EVERYTHING THAT YOU THINK IS CORRECT.
YOUR CONDITIONS MAY BE WRONG.
ARE YOU HAVING ISSUES WITH SOMETHING?
HMM...
ASSUMPTIONS, HUH?
ASSUMP-TIONS?
HAH...
?
SIGH
DEBUGGING HUMANS IS OUTSIDE OF MY EXPERTISE...

Chapter 9
SHIMIZU-SAN, PLEASE HELP ME!
YOU'RE ACTING SO WEAK!
SNIFF
SNIFF
GO BACK TO BEING THE USUAL, STRONG MAEKAWA!
PLAYING HIDE AND SEEK? WELL, I FOUND YOU.
I CAN'T DRAW...
UM, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF IT JUST NEVER COMES TOGETHER?
DON'T WORRY!
GLUM
I DON'T NEED YOUR CONSO-LATION.
MAEKAWA'S WORK SPEED
SLOW
FAST
STORYBOARD
ROUGH DRAFT
INKING
WHAT? YOU'RE HAVING PROBLEMS WITH YOUR STORYBOARD?
UGH...
IT ALWAYS TAKES SO LONG.
HONESTLY, WHAT'S UP WITH HER?
SPINNING
SPINNING
THIS IS LIKE PREACHING TO BUDDHA...
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN TEACH HER ABOUT DRAWING MANGA, AFTER ALL.

HAVE YOU CALMED DOWN?
YES.
I WANT TO HELP, BUT...
LET'S DRINK SOME TEA.
ALL I CAN DO IS GIVE HER A CHANGE OF PACE.
MAEKAWA...
WHAT KIND OF MANGA ARTIST DO YOU WANT TO BE?
SPINNING
SPINNING
SHE'S STILL STUCK IN HER HEAD.
HMM...

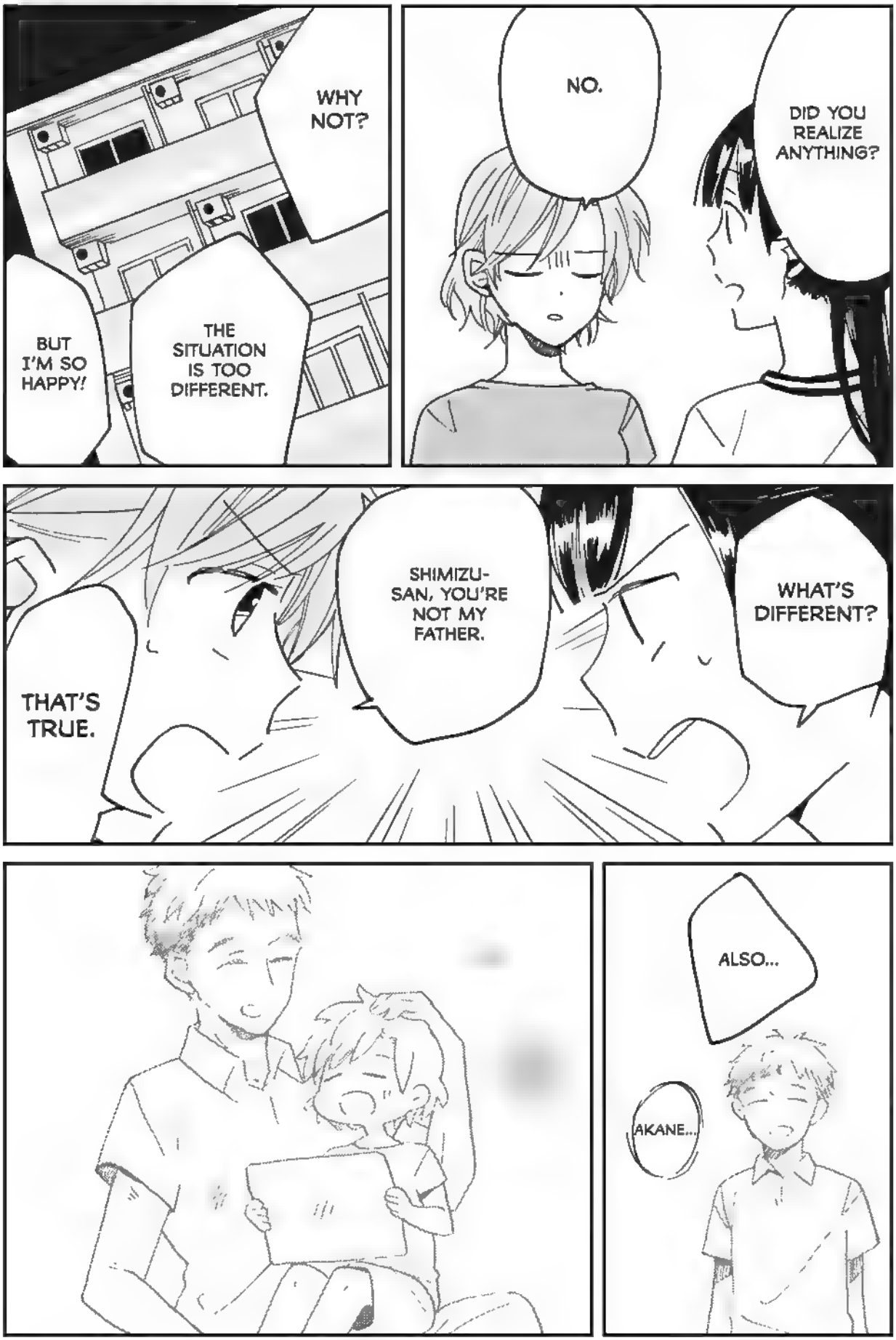
THEN LET'S TALK ABOUT THE PAST.
WHEN WERE YOU HAPPIEST WHILE DRAWING MANGA BEFORE?
I GUESS IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU WANT TO TURN YOUR THOUGHTS INTO A COMIC.
I KNOW.
IT'S HARD TO ANSWER WHEN ASKED SO SUDDENLY.
FLASH
HMM...
OKAY, I GET IT.
YOU GET WHAT?
WHEN MY FATHER SMILED AT THE PICTURE I DREW.

DU-DUN
DRAW ME A PICTURE OF MY FAVORITE PAIRING!
MAEKAWA!

CACKLE
BEEP
HEY, DON'T TURN THE TV ON WHEN I'M TALKING!

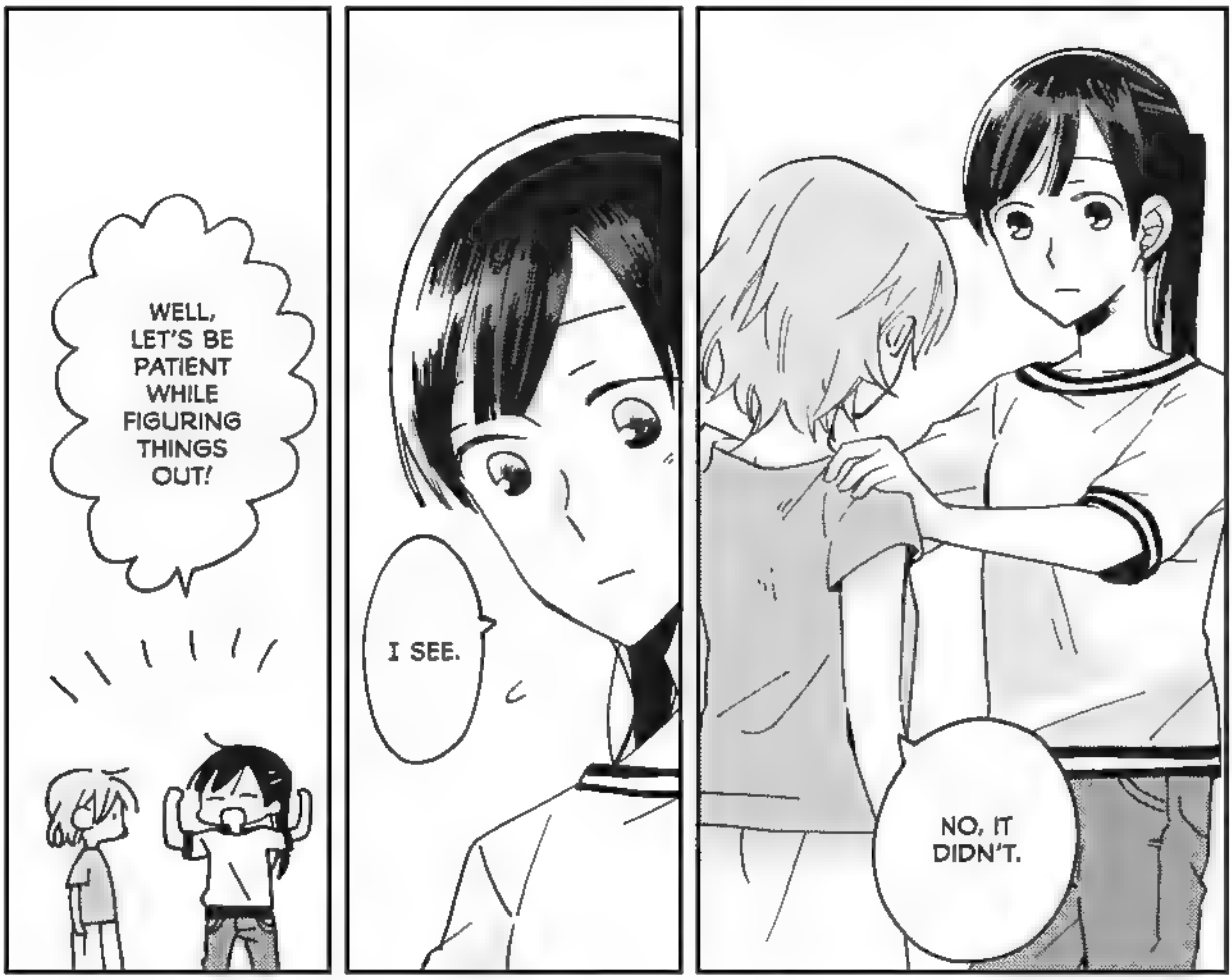
NOOO! JUST LISTEN TO ME!
YOU'RE SO PERSISTENT ABOUT THAT.
YOU WERE HAPPY BECAUSE THE PICTURE YOU DREW MADE YOUR DAD HAPPY, RIGHT?
SO LET'S RECREATE THAT SITUATION!

SCRITCH
SCRITCH
OKAY?
OKAY?
...
YOU MIGHT REALIZE SOMETHING THAT HELPS YOU DECIDE HOW YOU WANT TO DRAW!
MMM...
ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THIS?
IT'S...
IT'S THEM...
IT'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF THIS!
PLEASE REMEMBER WHY WE'RE DOING THIS.
TODAY WAS A GREAT DAY! I GUESS I SHOULD GO HOME.
WOOHOO!
WHAT A VALUABLE PROVISION!
BEHOLD!
THE GODDESS OF ART!
THANKS, MAEKAWA!


WHY NOT?
BUT I'M SO HAPPY!
THE SITUATION IS TOO DIFFERENT.
NO.
DID YOU REALIZE ANYTHING?
THAT'S TRUE.
SHIMIZU-SAN, YOU'RE NOT MY FATHER.
WHAT'S DIFFERENT?
ALSO...
AKANE...

MAEKAWA?

!
DID SOMETHING COME TO YOU?
"I WANT TO BE LOVED."


WELL, LET'S BE PATIENT WHILE FIGURING THINGS OUT!
I SEE.
NO, IT DIDN'T.

I COULDN'T HELP HER.
HMPH.
HEY.
AH...

I WANT TO HELP THEM...
BUT I'M NOT SURE HOW TO.
HMM...
NOTHING.
IT'S AWKWARD...
WHAT'S WITH THAT REACTION?
YEAH.
YOU COULD SAY IT HAS TO DO WITH PERSONNEL TRAINING.
SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
I GUESS JUST HEAR THEM OUT UNTIL THEY CAN SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS ON THEIR OWN.
I CAN'T HELP BUT WORRY.
WELL...
THEY'LL GET DEPENDENT ON YOU IF YOU SPOIL THEM.
BUT YOU CAN'T HELP THEM FOREVER.
THEN WHAT WOULD YOU DO, KIDOGUCHI?

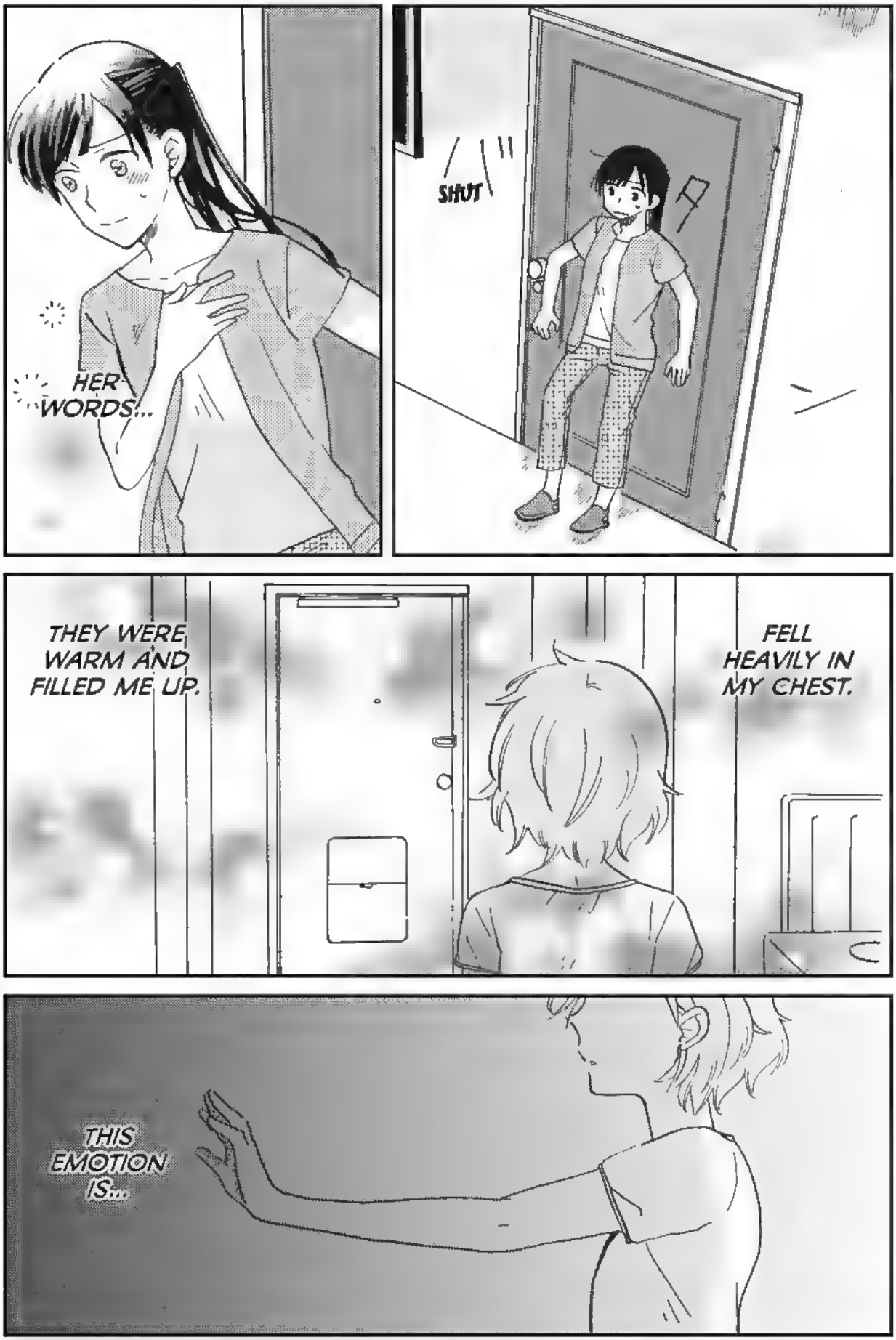
MMM.
IT'S RARE FOR YOU TO WORRY ABOUT OTHERS SO MUCH.
まる SLUMP
EVEN I DON'T KNOW WHY...
BUT I JUST CAN'T LEAVE IT ALONE.
SHE HAS A BAD HABIT OF HIDING IN CRAMPED PLACES.
HNGH...
HNGH...

GOODNESS.
MESSY
NO WONDER YOU CAN'T COLLECT YOUR THOUGHTS.
WHAT ARE THESE?
SKETCHES?
I THOUGHT I WAS TOLD MY ART WAS BORING...
BECAUSE BACK THEN, I WAS TRYING TO DRAW SOMETHING THAT I DIDN'T HAVE INSIDE OF ME.
SO I THOUGHT I'D TRY DRAWING WHAT I DO HAVE INSIDE.

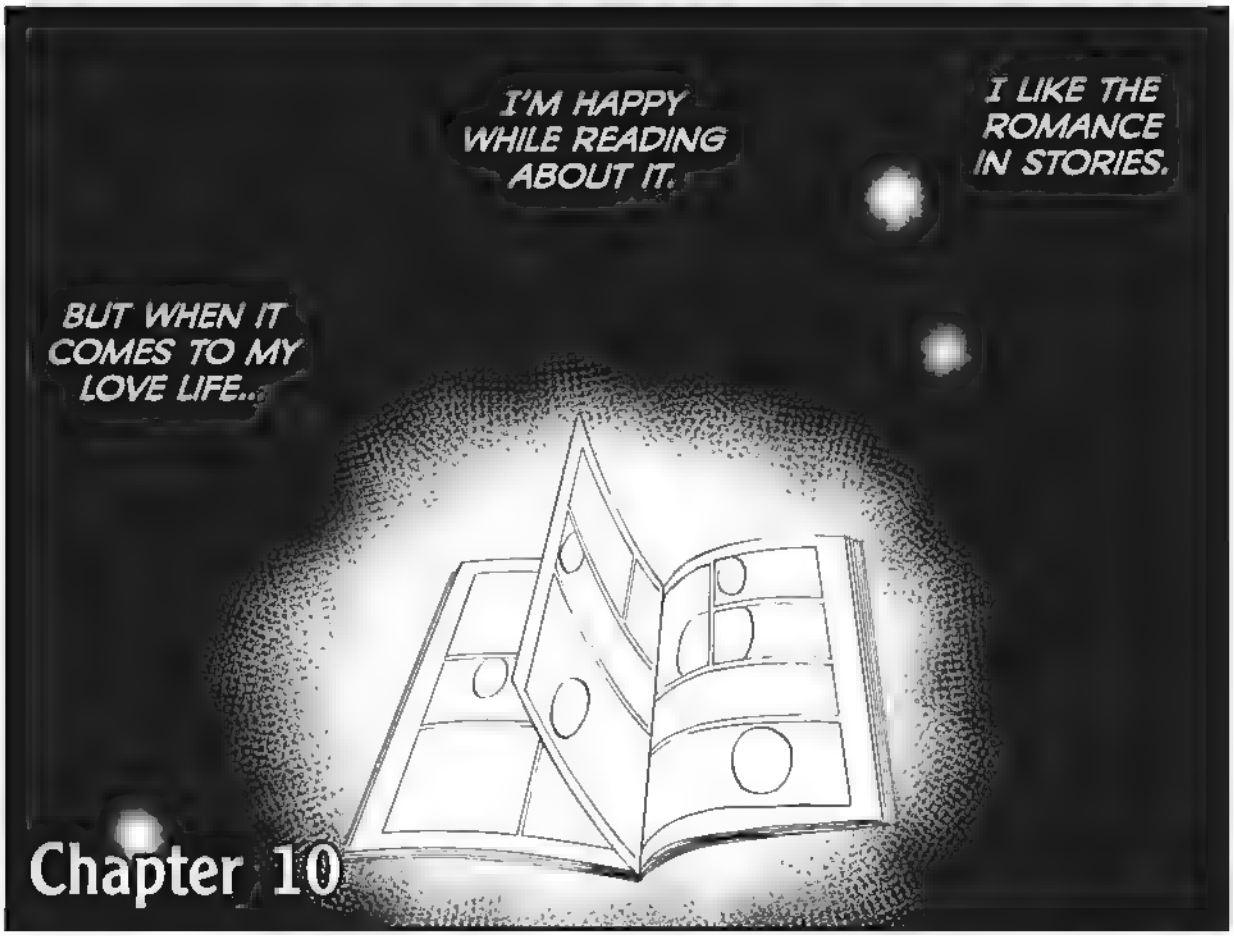
OH, IT'S TOKYO BIG SIGHT!
HA HA!
I GET IT.
BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
THE MORE I REMEMBER FROM BACK THEN, THE MORE I HATE MYSELF.
I DON'T EVEN LIKE MY OWN WORK.

YOU HAVE A TWISTED PERSONALITY...
BUT YOU'RE HONEST WHEN IT'S IMPORTANT.
GRRR
TAKE THAT OFF!
IT'S BECAUSE YOU KEEP HIDING LIKE THIS!
WHY DO YOU HATE YOURSELF SO MUCH?
THAT'S WHY...
PLUS YOU RELY ON ME, A NO-GOOD FAN-ZINE ARTIST.
I LIKE YOU, MAEKAWA.

HUH?
POINT
HURRY UP AND GET SOME REST!
I'M GOING HOME.
I DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT!
D-DON'T MISUNDERSTAND!
YOU'RE GOING TO TEASE ME AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?
GASP
WAAAH!


HER WORDS...
SHUT
THEY WERE WARM AND FILLED ME UP.
FELL HEAVILY IN MY CHEST.
THIS EMOTION IS...

I LIKE HER...
WHY DID SHE HAVE TO SAY THAT?


I'M HAPPY WHILE READING ABOUT IT.
I LIKE THE ROMANCE IN STORIES.
BUT WHEN IT COMES TO MY LOVE LIFE...
Chapter 10

I LIKE YOU.

I STOP ACTING LIKE MYSELF AND IT WEIRDS ME OUT.

SHAKE
ふ"
ん
SHAKE
ふ"
ん
NO!
I DIDN'T SAY IT WITH THAT IN MIND!
DO I REALLY LIKE HER?
IT'S TRUE...
THAT MAEKAWA IS SPECIAL TO ME, BUT NOT IN THAT WAY.

OH...
YANK
ARE YOU GOING OUT?
YEAH, FOR A MEETING WITH A CLIENT.
YOU NEED TO FIX YOUR COLLAR.
GAH!
STAY CALM, STAY CALM...

PAT
ぽん！
THERE.
YOU LOOK COOLER WHEN YOU DRESS PROPERLY.
YOU LOOK SLOPPY!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? LEAVE ME ALONE!
バタン！
SLAM
OH, DID I ANGER HER?
ほほほほ～
TEE HEE HEE
YOU TWO ACT JUST LIKE NEWLYWEDS!
は
GASP

SHE'S SO INTO THIS...
I AM MAEKAWA'S SUPPORT.
NO, NO!
I WON'T BE MISLED!
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
I HAVE TO BE USEFUL FOR HER SAKE!

DON'T WORRY, I WON'T BE ADVENTUROUS.
YOU SHOULDN'T TREAT FOOD THAT WAY.
SHIMIZU-SAN, YOU SEEM LIKE THE TYPE WHO TRIES TO BE CREATIVE AND RUINS THE FOOD.
FWOOSH
I'M GOING TO COOK FOR YOU!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
M. S
CLANG
OUCH.
HUH?
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THIS?
HEY!
TOSS
IT'S SALTY.
I HATE SHIITAKE MUSH-ROOMS.
TA-DA!
ALL DONE!

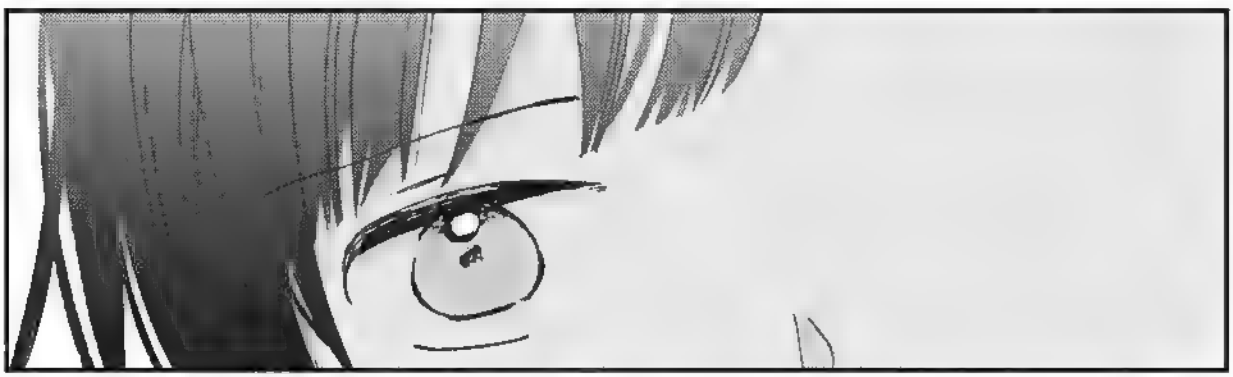
ガーーーん
SHOCK
YOU DON'T HAVE TO ANYMORE.
I NEVER ASKED YOU TO DO THAT!
YOU'RE ALWAYS LIKE THIS!
YOU COMPLAIN A LOT FOR SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T HAVE TO COOK.
SHIMIZU-SAN.
SIGH はあ
I WAS USELESS...
SNIFF
SNIFF

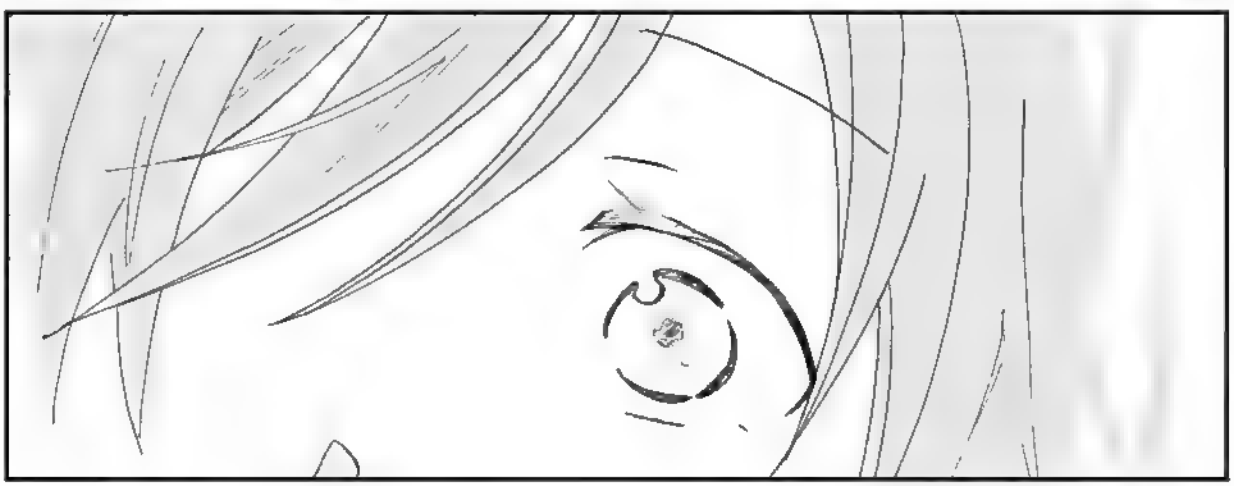
IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR SNEAKING UP BEHIND ME LIKE THAT!
SHIMIZU-SAN...
SQUEEZE
キュッ
SHATTER
ARE YOU GOING TO TEASE ME AGAIN?
WHAT IS IT?
YOU CAUGHT ME.
HA HA...
SHIMIZU-SAN...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO FORCE YOURSELF FOR MY SAKE.
ISN'T IT TIRING TO BE SO CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS?

SQUEEZE
ぎゅっ
YOU'RE WORKING HARD, SO I SHOULD–
THAT'S NOT TRUE!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING.
I'LL BE GOOD.
OKAY.
OH, I GET IT. I BET IT'S HARD FOR HER TO CONCEN-TRATE.

IN THE PAST...
I NEVER WANTED TO DO SOMETHING FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S SAKE.
THIS IS DISAPPOINTING.
BUT NOW...

I THINK I'VE FINALLY GOTTEN MY STORYBOARD ON TRACK.
I WANT TO SUPPORT MAEKAWA.
I WANT TO SEE HER SMILE.
I'LL LET YOU READ IT ONCE I'M DONE. THAT WAY, YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK!





GASP
はっ
STUPID.
YOU GOT THE WRONG IDEA.
AH, SHIMIZU-SAN–
I'LL GO HOME.
SORRY.

I'LL STOP ACTING LIKE MYSELF.
I CAN'T ACCEPT THAT I'M IN LOVE.
I...

ばったり
FREEZE
OH, SHIMIZU-SAN.
SEE YOU LATER.
OKAY!
I'M HEADING OUT FOR A MEETING.
AH!
PERFECT! WANTED TO-
DASH
SORRY, I'M IN A HURRY!
SHIMIZU...

WHAT'S UP WITH YOU? YOU ALWAYS COMPLAIN ABOUT RUSH REQUESTS.
...
THERE'S NO THRILL THIS TIME.
I GOT IT.
OKAY.
I HAVE A HUGE FAVOR TO ASK OF YOU, AND I'M IN A HURRY!
AH...
PLEASE?
I'LL BE TOO BUSY WITH WORK TO HANG OUT FOR A WHILE~
20:30
SORRY
20:31
20:31
HIMIZU
SIGH
IT'S GONNA BE SO AWKWARD TO SEE HER FOR A WHILE.
I'LL PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN US AND SORT OUT MY FEELINGS.

UGH!
I HATE THIS...
I HATE BEING ALONE...
SHE HASN'T REPLIED.
YEAH, LET'S JUST GO WITH THAT.
MAYBE SHE WANTS TO FOCUS SINCE HER STORYBOARD IS GOING WELL.
I NEED TO GET WORK DONE, TOO.

PROCRASTINATING ALWAYS MAKES THINGS SEEM SO MUCH HARDER...
YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME BEFORE THE PROJECT WENT UP IN FLAMES.
PHEW...
THANK YOU. WE'VE FINALLY FINISHED.
MAEKAWA-SAN WANTED ME TO PASS ON A MESSAGE!
HUH?
OH, RIGHT.
DECIDED WHETHER OR NOT YOU'LL GO ON THE COMPANY RETREAT IN JULY.
YEAH...
WH-WHAT IS IT?
SHE SAID THAT YOU HAVEN'T...

BUT IT'LL BE AT A JAPANESE INN WITH AN ONSEN!
IMAGINE THE SEA! AND THE NIGHT SCENERY!
A JAPANESE INN?
THINK OF IT AS A CHANCE TO CREATE MEMORIES WITH MAEKAWA-SAN!
CLACK
カチャカチャ
CLACK
TAP
WE'RE GOING TO ATAMI!
NOT INTERESTED, SO NOT GOING.
ぽわわ
FUZZY
MAEKAWA IN A YUKATA...
ぶん!
SHAKE
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? THAT'S RIDICULOUS!
I WON'T GO ON SUCH A SHAMELESS TOUR!
JUST WHAT ARE YOU IMAGINING?

I CAME BACK TO GET MY UMBRELLA.
MAEKAWA!
I THOUGHT YOU WENT HOME.
I'M HEADING HOME. DON'T FORGET TO LOCK UP!
OKAY.
SHIMIZU-SAN, ARE YOU DONE WITH WORK?
IT'S RAINING OUTSIDE.
I'LL WAIT FOR YOU.
YOU CAN GO ON AHEAD.
I STILL HAVE STUFF TO DO.
NO.

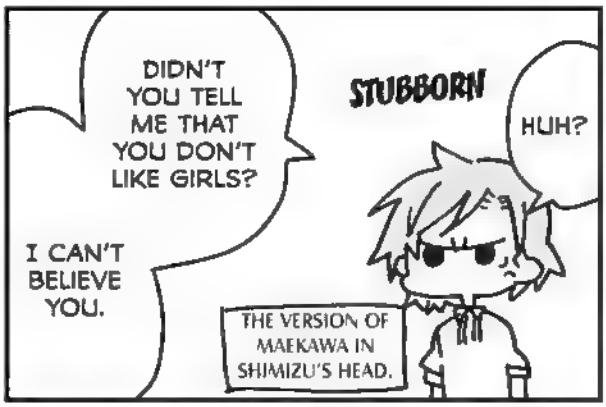
I'LL WAIT.
SHE SEEMS ANGRY...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 78 (AFTER CHAPTER 11)...

I'LL WAIT.
Chapter 11
POUR
...
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK

...ARE YOU PLANNING ON GETTING ANGRY WITH ME?
SHIMIZU-SAN, YOU NEVER SUBMITTED YOUR EXPENSE REPORT FOR YOUR BUSINESS TRIP THE OTHER DAY.
KOIKE-SAN WILL GET ANGRY, YOU KNOW.
HEY!
KOIKE-SAN FROM ACCOUNTING
OH, CRAP. I FORGOT.
WHAT DO I HAVE TO BE ANGRY ABOUT?
CLOSE
...LET'S GO HOME, SHALL WE?
YES, LET'S.
FLINCH
UNLESS YOU THINK I SHOULD BE.
THE PERSON WHO HID BEHIND WORK.

IT'S RAINING PRETTY HARD.
POUR
RUNNING AWAY WON'T DO ANYTHING...
BUT SHOULD I REALLY TELL HER MY TRUE FEELINGS?
SHOULD WE WAIT IT OUT?
NO.


DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT YOU DON'T LIKE GIRLS?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU.
STUBBORN
HUH?
THE VERSION OF MAEKAWA IN SHIMIZU'S HEAD.

IT'S HARD TO SAY...

IF I TELL HER THAT I MIGHT HAVE STARTED TO LIKE HER ROMANTICALLY...

IT'S ALL RIGHT IF I DON'T MENTION IT, RIGHT?
HOW IS YOUR MANUSCRIPT COMING ALONG?
NOT WELL.
I HAD TO SCRAP EVERYTHING.
OOF, THAT'S ROUGH.

NOT THAT I EVER REALLY DO MUCH...
HEH
I'LL VISIT AGAIN ONCE WORK CALMS DOWN.
SORRY I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO HELP OUT RECENTLY.
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, SHIMIZU-SAN.
HUH?

FWUMP
PANIC
PANIC
PANIC
PANIC
OH, YOU POOR THING, YOU'RE NOT FEELING WELL!
THE LIGHT'S GREEN NOW, SO LET'S HURRY HOME!
U-UM, WHAT? WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
GASP

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
I THOUGHT WE NEEDED TO TALK THINGS OUT IN A PRIVATE PLACE.
THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE SAID THAT!
SIGH
SLAM
BESIDES, YOU CLING TO PEOPLE WAY TOO MUCH.
YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH DISTANCE IS APPROPRIATE!
I DON'T CLING TO OTHERS.
HUH?

I DON'T DO THIS WITH ANYONE BUT YOU.
CLATTER

DON'T TEASE ME!
IT'S THE TRUTH.
STOP DOING STUFF LIKE THAT.
I'M GLAD YOU THINK I'M SPECIAL...
BUT WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF I GOT THE WRONG IMPRESSION?
HEY, SHIMIZU-SAN...

WHAT?
AREN'T YOU JUST AFRAID OF BEING REJECTED?
YOU'RE...
ATTRACTED TO WOMEN, AREN'T YOU?
WH-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
IS THAT WHY YOU HIDE AWAY IN THE WORLD OF COMICS?
DON'T WORRY.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK SO FRIGHTENED.
YOU'RE WRONG!
HA HA! ROMANTIC LOVE IS SO FLEETING.
I SIMPLY WANT HAPPINESS FOR MY OTP-

NOT ON PAPER, BUT IN THE FLESH.
YOU CAN EXPOSE YOURSELF TO ME...
I WON'T REJECT YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE.
!
SHE'S LYING.
MAEKA-
BACK THEN, SHE...
WHY?

SO
PLEASE
STAY BY
MY SIDE.

I LIKE YOU, MAEKAWA.
I WASN'T ABLE TO VIEW THEM AS AN INDIVIDUAL.
I WAS DECIDING EVERYTHING BASED ON ONE PERSON WHO HURT ME.
BUT IT'S AS YOU SAID.
I THOUGHT I DIDN'T LIKE WOMEN...

THE FANZINES HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS.
YOU NOTICED, DIDN'T YOU?
I'M SORRY I FORCED YOU TO BE CONSIDERATE OF ME.
I'VE BEEN WORRYING ABOUT THIS...
BUT IT SEEMS I LIKE YOU SO MUCH THERE'S NO HELPING IT.
...I DON'T CARE.
IS THAT ALL RIGHT?
BUT I WANT TO SUPPORT YOU AS I ALWAYS HAVE.
I STILL HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT I WANT TO DO WITH THESE FEELINGS...

HUH?
I DON'T CARE...
はーぁ
SIGH
DON'T SAY THAT!
WHAT'S WITH THAT TONE OF VOICE?
BESIDES, YOU'RE WRONG!
I'M SURE YOU'D FALL FOR ANY GIRL WITH A PRETTY FACE WHO TREATS YOU KINDLY.
ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL FOR ME.

OUR RELATION-SHIP TO BE SOMETHING THAT BREAKS SO EASILY.
I DON'T WANT...
STOP MAKING THINGS SO AWKWARD.
I KNOW.
THANKS.
...
YEAH.

SO WE'VE MADE UP?
REACH
OKAY?
MY FEELINGS FOR YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED THE FACT THAT I WANT TO SUPPORT YOU NO MATTER WHAT.
I LOVE IT WHEN YOU WORK EARNESTLY ON YOUR MANUSCRIPT!

I'M NOT SCARED OF YOU, SHIMIZU-SAN.
DON'T WORRY! I WON'T DO ANYTHING WEIRD.
GAINT
PHEW...
NO THANKS!
AND DON'T DO ANYTHING WEIRD.
I DON'T MIND.
RATHER, WE SHOULD TAKE CARE OF YOUR DESIRES BEFORE YOUR PATIENCE TURNS INTO DISCONTENT!

AND YOU'RE NOT ATTRACTED TO ME, RIGHT?
YOU SHOULD ONLY DO THAT WITH SOMEONE YOU'RE DATING!
SEE? I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE IT.
YEAH, I DON'T KNOW THAT I'D BE ABLE TO DATE YOU.

I'M THIRSTY.
NO WAY! WHY SHOULD I?
AND I WANT MORE TEA.
HOW ARE YOU BACK TO NORMAL SO QUICKLY?!
NOW, GO HOME AND WORK ON YOUR STORY-BOARDS.
WHAAAT? LET ME STAY OVER!
WHAT AM I, A PET PLANT?
I CAN'T CALM DOWN AND THINK OF IDEAS UNLESS I HAVE YOU IN THE ROOM WITH ME.
I CALM HER DOWN, HUH?

HNGH!
UGH!
JUST A LITTLE MORE...
BUT IT'S MISSING SOME-THING!
JUST GO TO SLEEP.

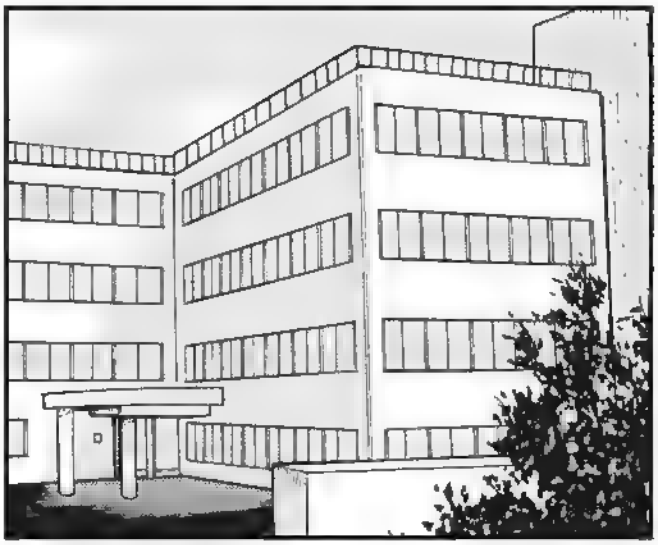
WELL, WHATEVER.

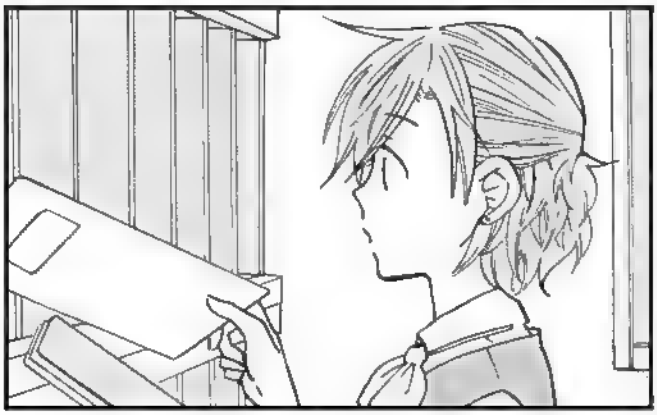
IS THIS REALLY WHAT'S BEST?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 129 (AFTER CHAPTER 13).

IS THIS REALLY THE DEVELOPMENT YOU WERE GOING FOR?
I HAVE NO CHOICE IF I WANT TO KEEP THE STORY GOING.
YOU'RE GOING TO GET RID OF THIS CHARACTER?
THE READERS DON'T LIKE THEM, SO I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.
EVERY TIME I SAID, "I HAVE NO CHOICE"...

Chapter 12

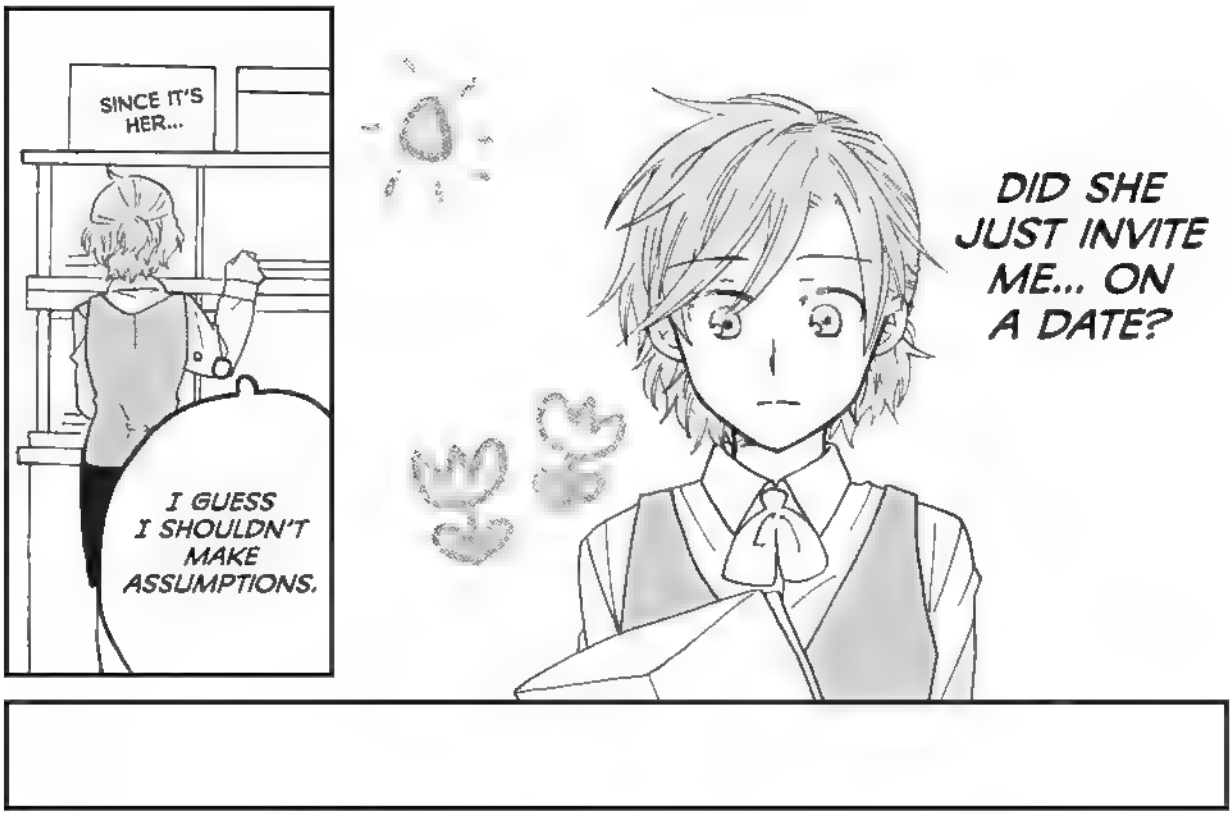




I FELT LIKE MY EMOTIONS DISAPPEARED, ONE BY ONE...

MORNING!
KER-CHAK
OKAY, I'LL HEAD BACK TO THE DEVELOPMENT LAB.
WHAT DOES THE KID FROM SALES WANT?
YOU LOOK SO ENERGETIC YOU'RE ABOUT TO BURST.
OH, THANKS!
YOU'RE WELCOME...?
AS USUAL, SHE'S QUICK TO GET BACK TO NORMAL.
AH...

YOU SHOULD GO OUT SOMETIMES.
DON'T YOU NEED A CHANGE OF PACE?
JUST WORKING ON MY STORY-BOARDS.
ARE YOU FREE THIS WEEKEND?
WELL, THINK ABOUT IT.
HMM...
I LIKE YOU!

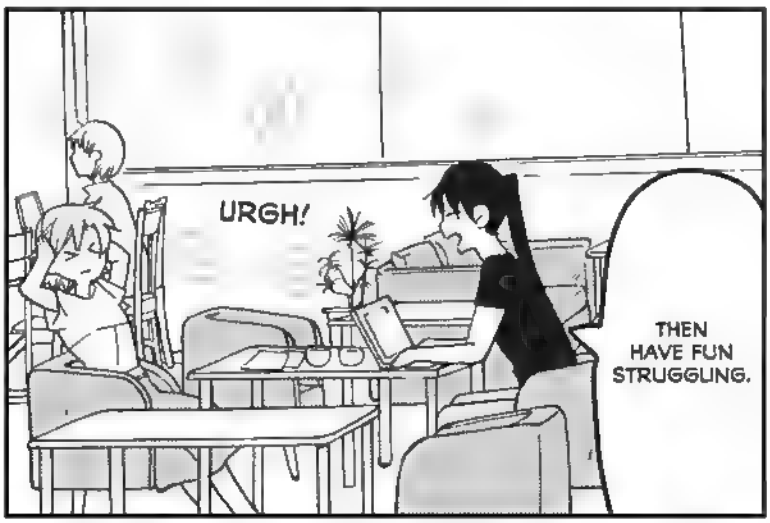

SINCE IT'S HER...
I GUESS I SHOULDN'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS.
DID SHE JUST INVITE ME... ON A DATE?

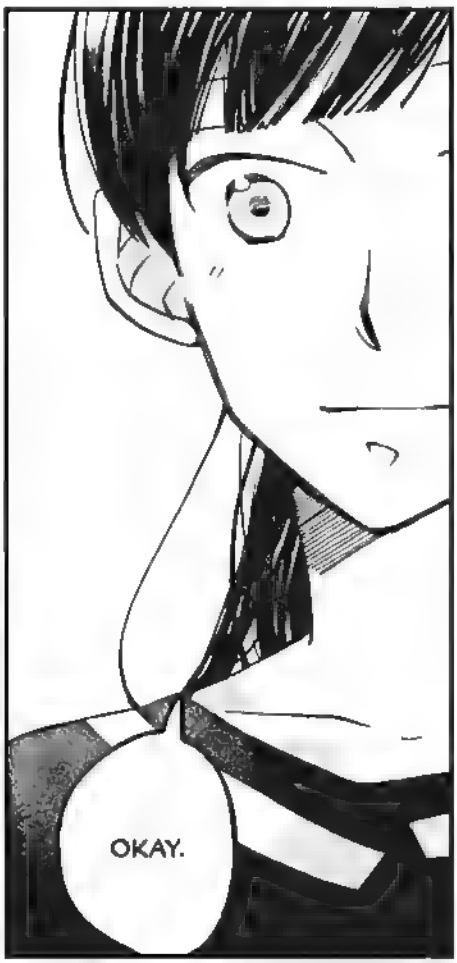
ANIME SHOP
キリ GLINT
I BET YOU NEVER COME HERE.
DON'T GET LOST, OKAY?

I WANTED TO GET MY HANDS ON THIS STORE'S SPECIAL FREEBIES!
STILL CHIC [2]
I'M DEEPLY MOVED BY HOW NORMAL YOU'RE ACTING.
EXCITED
EXCITED
THERE'S A CAFÉ OVER THERE WHERE YOU CAN WORK ON YOUR STORYBOARD.
WHY ARE YOU SO QUIET?
HOW IS YOUR STORYBOARD COMING ALONG?
HMM...
I MADE THE RIGHT CALL INVITING HER TO HANG OUT WITH ME ON MY OWN TURF, WHERE I'M NOT NERVOUS!
YEAH!
BEING ALONE TOGETHER IN AN APARTMENT WOULD'VE BEEN AWKWARD...

YOU JUST NEED TO THROW IN A BUNCH OF SPICY, PASSIONATE ENERGY!
IT'LL BECOME UNINTELLIGIBLE IF I DON'T THINK OF THE READERS, FIRST.
IT'S STILL MISSING SOMETHING.
REALLY?
IT NEEDS TO BECOME POPULAR, SINCE I'LL BE PUBLISHING IT AS A PROPER COMIC.
I GUESS IT DEPENDS ON THE AUTHOR.
I JUST WANT TO FIND A SWEET SPOT I'M COMFORTABLE WITH.
BUT YOU'LL NEVER FINISH IF YOU ALWAYS FOCUS ON WHAT OTHERS MIGHT THINK.
IT'S NOT EASY TO CREATE A SERIES THAT MANY READERS CAN ENJOY...
WHILE STILL SHOWCASING THE AUTHOR'S UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS.

I'VE ALWAYS GIVEN UP BEFORE BEING SATISFIED WITH MY WORK...
AND I THINK THAT SHOWS IN MY COMICS.
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO PLAN THINGS OUT UNTIL I'M SATISFIED.


URGH!
THEN HAVE FUN STRUGGLING.


OKAY.

ATAMI
BY THE WAY, ONE OF THE OTHER EMPLOYEES CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE COMPANY RETREAT, SO YOU SHOULD GO IN THEIR PLACE.
WHAT? NO WAY.
I WONDER WHEN THE RAINY SEASON WILL END.
IT'S STARTING TO GET HOTTER.
THIS GIRL...!
SMIRK
SMIRK
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT ME TO GO ON SUCH A "SHAMELESS" TOUR ALONE?
WHAT?
I'LL JUST TELL MY TRUSTED SUBORDINATES TO KEEP AN EYE ON YOU!

SMILE
I DO!
I'D BE HAPPY IF YOU CAME, SHIMIZU-SAN.
IF YOU INSIST ON MY GOING, I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
SO YOU'VE LEARNED...
HMPH.
YOU ACT CUTE WHEN YOU WANT A FAVOR!

IT'S TRUE.
I'M DISAPPOINTED EVEN WHEN I'M HAPPY.
THE TINIEST COMMENT IS ENOUGH TO HURT ME AND MAKE ME ANGRY.
I EXPERIENCE SO MANY DIFFERENT EMOTIONS WHEN I'M WITH YOU.

THAT'S
NOT FAIR...

WHAT IS THIS?
I'LL BE BUSY FOR A WHILE...
HI!
SO KEEP IT WITH YOU AND PRETEND IT'S ME.
UM, I TRY NOT TO CLUTTER MY ROOM WITH THINGS...
IT'S JUST ONE TEDDY BEAR!

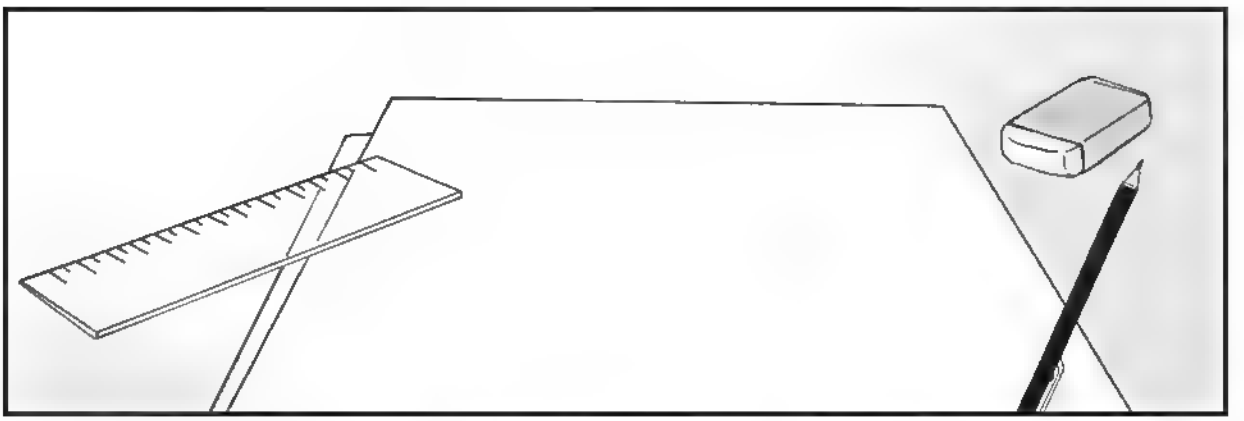
SMACK
DON'T TORMENT THE FAKE ME!
OKAY, I'LL IMAGINE IT'S YOU WHILE USING IT TO RELIEVE STRESS.
TA-DA!
LOOK, I BOUGHT A MATCHING ONE FOR MYSELF!
EW...
WORK HARD ON YOUR MANUSCRIPT, OKAY?
CROSS-COUNTER PUNCH!
OKAY.

BUT IT TAKES A LOT OF RESOLVE TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS TO SOMEONE.
I THOUGHT THIS BACK WHEN I CONFESSED TO YOU...
YOU MIGHT END UP HURT...
OR YOU MIGHT UPSET THE PERSON YOU'RE WITH.
AND YOU HAVE TO BE PREPARED.
THINGS MAY TURN OUT DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU EXPECTED...

DESPITE ALL THAT, I STILL WANTED TO TELL YOU.

I HOPE THAT...

YOU CAN EXPRESS THE THINGS THAT YOU WANT, TOO.



AN ANSWER TO MY PROBLEMS...

NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WORRY OVER THEM.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL FIND...

I HAVE TO WORK HARD TO MAKE MY THOUGHTS REACH EVEN JUST ONE PERSON...
I CAN'T SAY, "THERE'S NO HELPING IT," AS I RUN AWAY FROM THEM.

GOOD EVENING!
AND A NEWBIE FROM THE SALES DEPARTMENT?
SHIMIZU-SAN...

FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF A GUARDIAN...
I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE SHIMIZU-SAN TALKING WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.
HEY, DID YOU NEED SOMETHING FROM THE R&D TEAM?
SHE USED TO SAY SHE WASN'T GOOD AT DEALING WITH WOMEN, BUT SHE'S GROWN.

MAEKAWA!
YOU SEEM REALLY BUSY.
YEAH.
PEOPLE KEEP ASKING FAVORS OF ME AND I CAN'T TURN THEM DOWN.
ARE YOU HEADING HOME?
YES.
DANG IT. BAD TIMING.
I'LL BE EATING WITH THE OTHERS IN GENERAL AFFAIRS.
OH, I SEE.
DO YOU WANT TO GO OUT FOR LUNCH TOMORROW?

ARE YOU MAD ABOUT SOMETHING?
NO, I'M NOT. IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...
OH, MAEKAWA!
GRAB
WAIT!
SLAP

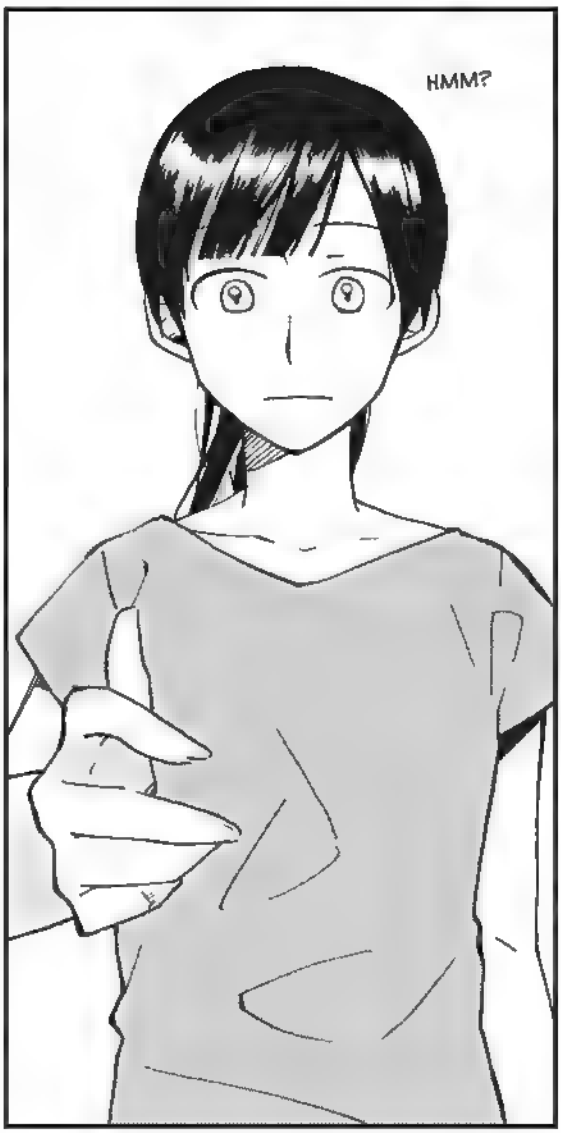
じー…
STING
スタスタスタスタ
TAP TAP TAP TAP
H-
HEY!
MAEKAWA!
SHE'S SO FAST...
ヒ
SCOLD
ニシャ!
O-OKAY!
IF YOU HAVE WORK TO DO, THEN HURRY UP AND GO BACK!

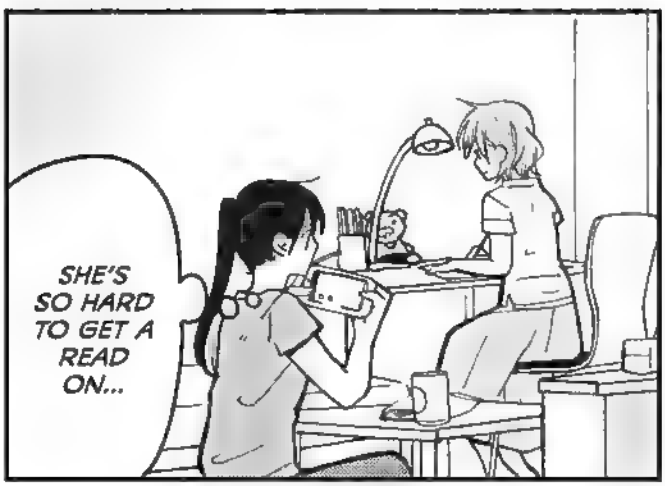
WHAT'S WITH HER?

THIS LOOKS GREAT!
MMM...
Chapter 13
HERE.
REALLY? WOW, THE END IS IN SIGHT!
I THINK I'LL CONTACT A PUBLISHER AFTER I DRAW ONE MORE CHAPTER.

TURN

ARE YOU IN A BAD MOOD?
SHOULD I GO HOME?
NO.

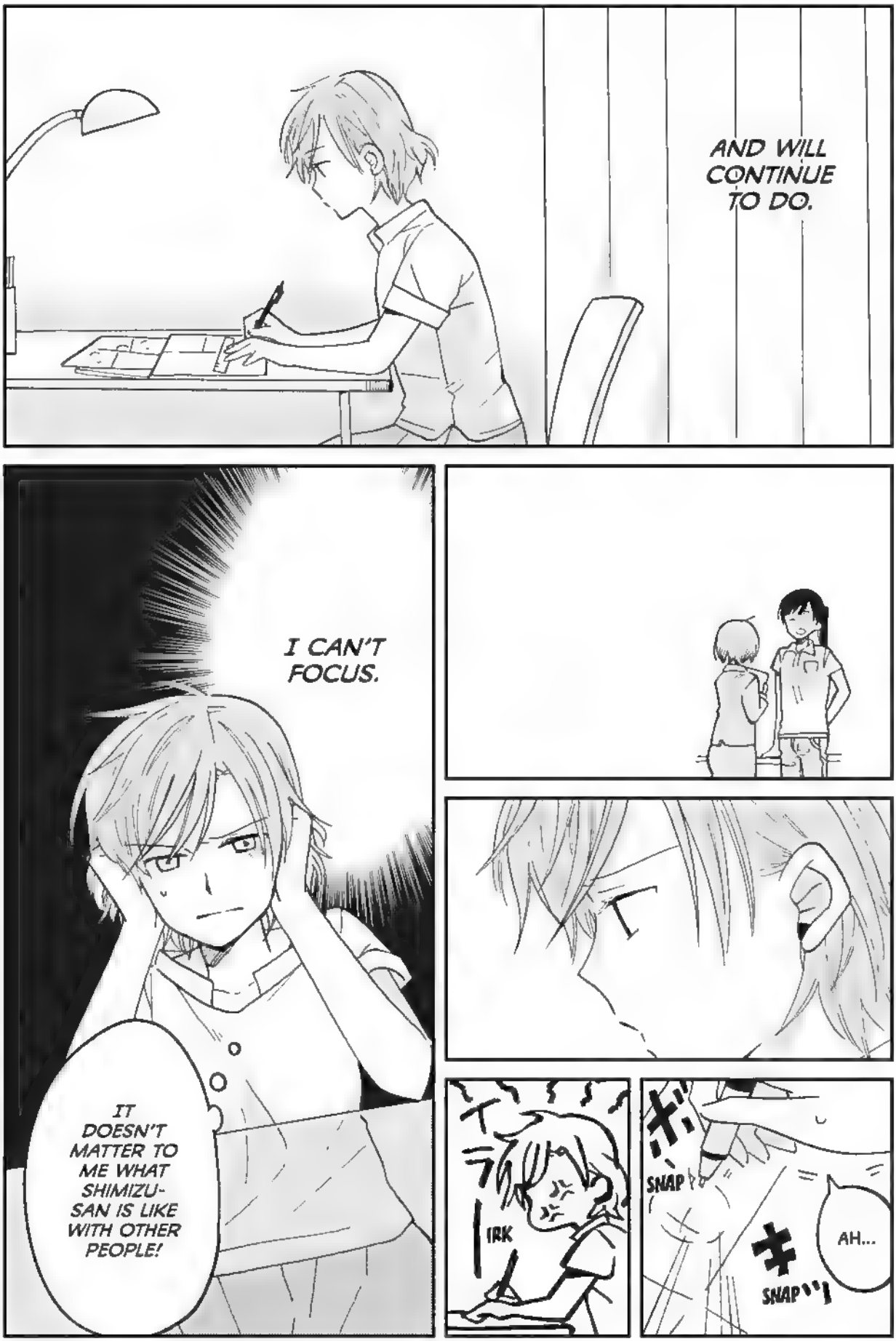

HMM?


SHE'S SO HARD TO GET A READ ON...

じっ
STARE
MAKE SURE TO GET SOME REST.
OKAY, I'M HEADING HOME.
HMM?
THUMP
ギュッ
SQUEEZE

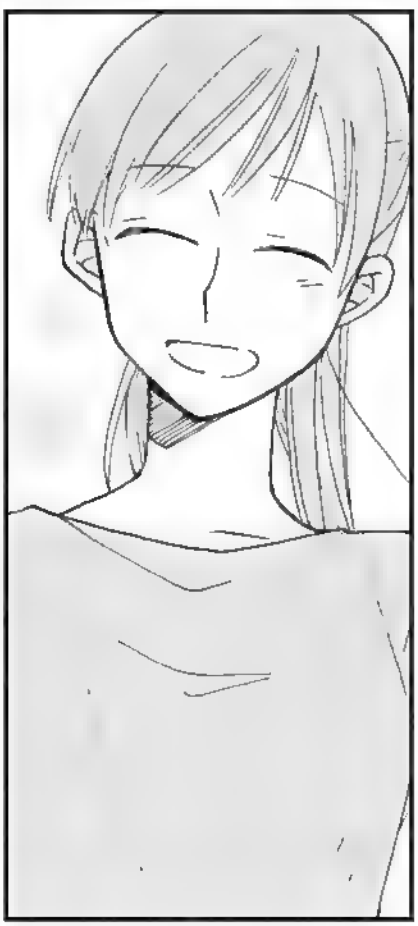
WHAT'S UP?
SHOVE
...GOOD NIGHT.
...
SHUT

RESTLESS
RESTLESS
RESTLESS
SHE DIDN'T SEEM TO BE ANGRY...
NOT THAT I CAN EVER TELL WHEN SHE IS.
PACE
PACE
PACE
WHAT WAS THAT?
THAT MUST BE IT!
WELL, SHE'S GOING THROUGH AN IMPORTANT TIME RIGHT NOW.
IT'S PROBABLY GOT HER FEELING CRANKY AND INSECURE.
ALL I CAN DO IS WATCH OVER HER.
AS I HAVE DONE...
SLAP
HISS
SHE'S BEEN ACTING STRANGE FOR A WHILE.
HMM...
I THOUGHT SHE WAS NORMAL TODAY, BUT...


AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO.
I CAN'T FOCUS.
IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME WHAT SHIMIZU-SAN IS LIKE WITH OTHER PEOPLE!
IRK
SNAP
SNAP
AH...

I WISH I DIDN'T HAVE ANY.
EMOTIONS ARE SO TROUBLESOME.
THINGS ARE FINALLY GOING SMOOTHLY...
I WANT TO FOCUS ON MY MANUSCRIPT.
UGH...

DO I WANT HER BY MY SIDE...
JUST FOR THE MANUSCRIPT'S SAKE?
OR IS IT...?



ぐしゃ
CRUMPLE
ポイ
TOSS
CAN I GO TO YOUR PLACE TODAY?

...NOT TODAY.
MAEKAWA?
OKAY.
THEN I'LL JUST WATCH ANIME AT HOME.
MAEKAWA, THERE'S SOMETHING IN YOUR HAIR.

SMACK
YOU'VE BEEN ACTING STRANGE RECENTLY!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID THAT WE SHOULDN'T LET THINGS GET AWKWARD!
WHAT, THIS AGAIN?
PLEASE DON'T COME WITHIN THREE FEET OF ME.

I'M NOT...
MAKING ANY PROGRESS.
MESSY
I DON'T KNOW...
WHAT IS ALL THIS?!

DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WERE GOING TO PLAN THINGS OUT UNTIL YOU WERE SATISFIED?
IF YOU STOP THINKING WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING, YOU'LL NEVER MOVE FORWARD.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THINK ABOUT WHY YOU'VE COME THIS FAR!
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.
IT DOESN'T INVOLVE YOU.
STOP HIDING IN THE CLOSET!

I KNOW THAT.
IS THIS REALLY THE TIME FOR A STAND STILL?
HUH? WHAT?
IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!

DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?
NO.
THAT'S NOT IT.
SHE'LL THINK I'M ANGRY AT HER AGAIN.
MY FAULT?
WHY?
DON'T ASK ME THAT.
IT HURTS ME TO BE WITH YOU, SHIMIZU-SAN...

THIS ISN'T WHAT I WANTED!
BUT DON'T GET TOO CLOSE.
STAY WITH ME...
AND DON'T ACT NICE TO OTHER WOMEN!
I WANT TO SHAKE OFF THESE EMOTIONS...
WHICH ARE BINDING ME AND KEEPING ME FROM MOVING.
THAT'S NOT IT!

I MIGHT LIKE SHIMIZU-SAN.
REACH OUT YOUR HAND AND SAVE ME...
PLEASE...
IT HURTS TO BREATHE.
NO!
THAT'S NOT WHAT MATTERS RIGHT NOW.

STOP ACTING SO SPOILED!
WHAM
I DON'T KNOW...

LET ME MAKE THIS CLEAR.
I HATE THAT YOU'VE STOPPED MAKING PROGRESS BECAUSE OF ME!
IF THAT'S WHAT THE PROBLEM IS, I'LL NEVER COME AGAIN.

YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO BE FOCUSING ON TRIVIAL THINGS, DO YOU?
SHIMIZU-SAN...
I...
CLATTER

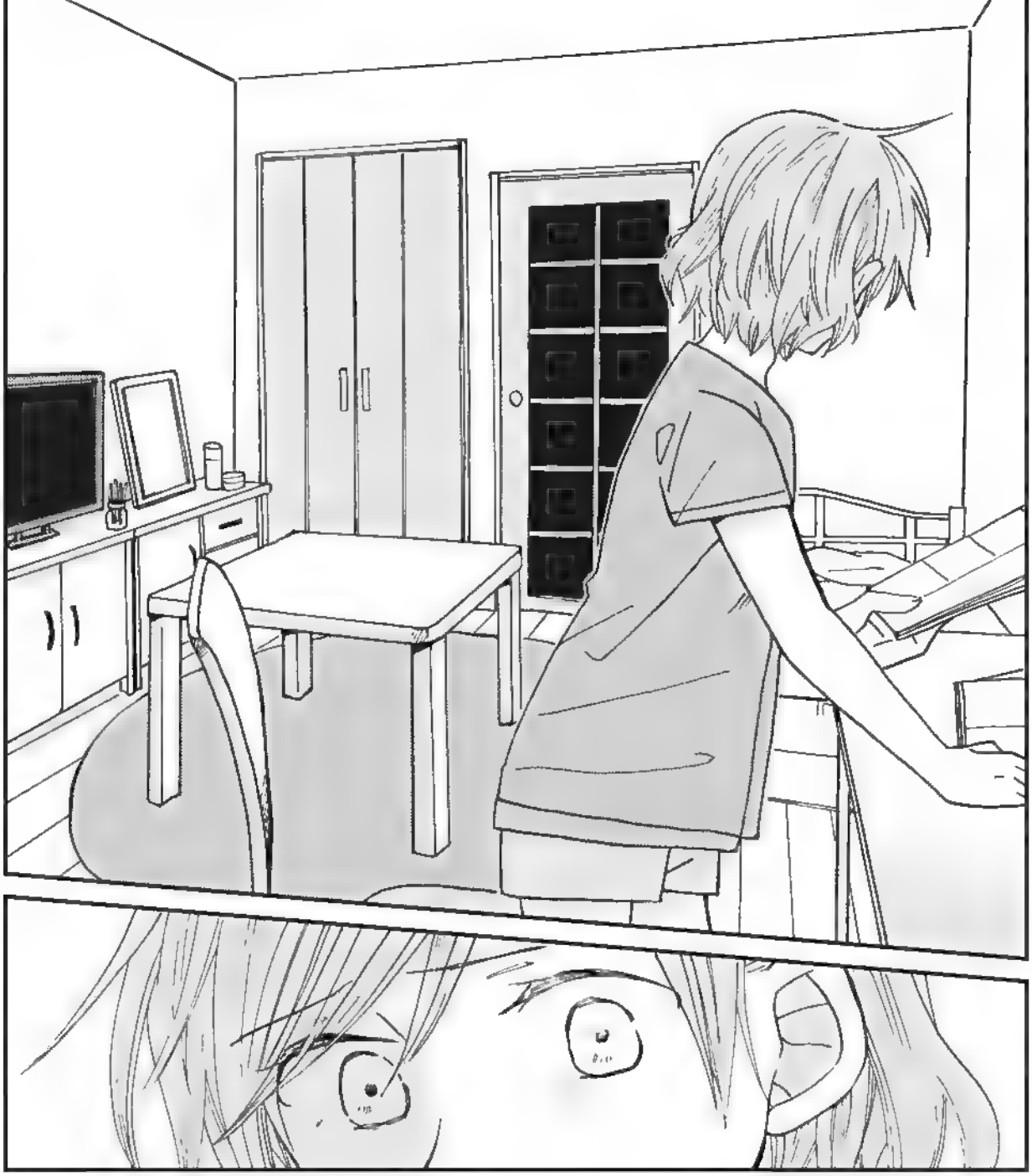
...HATE YOU.
I HATE YOU SO MUCH!
DON'T EVER COME HERE AGAIN.

I CAN'T HANDLE YOU JUMBLING MY EMOTIONS LIKE THIS!

BYE.
FINE.
SHUT
I HAVE TO DRAW...

...MORN-
ING.
GOOD
MORNING.
I HAVE
TO DRAW...
EVEN IF
SHIMIZU-SAN
ISN'T HERE.

PHEW
I FINISHED IT!
I'LL CONTACT THE PUBLISHER ON MONDAY.
NOW I CAN FINALLY–



BUT...

I WAS ABLE TO FINISH EVEN WITHOUT SHIMIZU-SAN.

OH, I FORGOT.
THE COMPANY RETREAT IS THIS WEEKEND.
SHIMIZU-SAN.
I WANTED HER TO BE HERE WHEN MY DREAM CAME TRUE...

"E..."

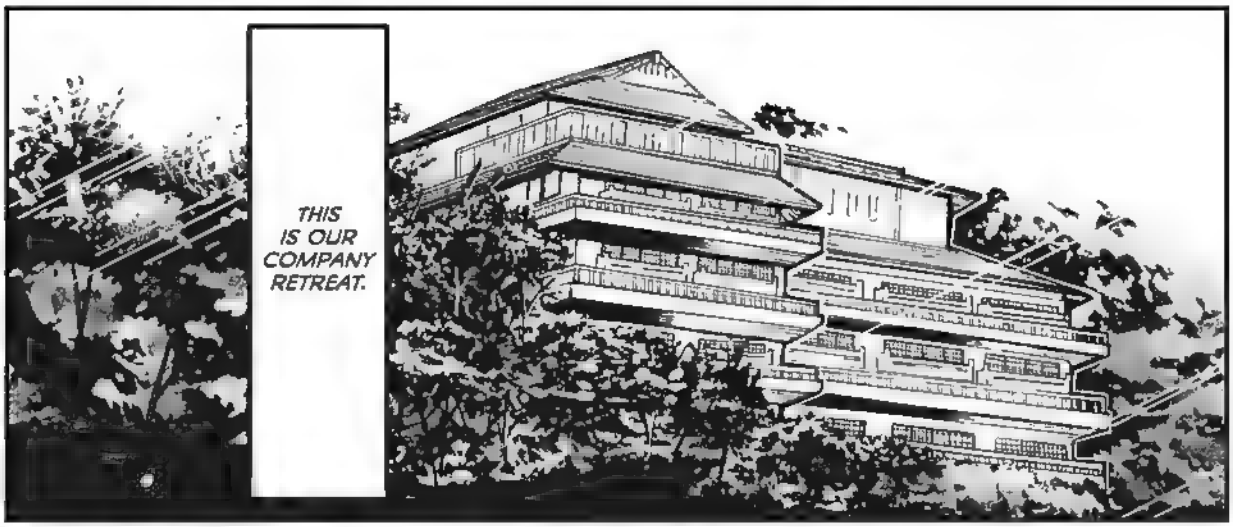
"KA..."

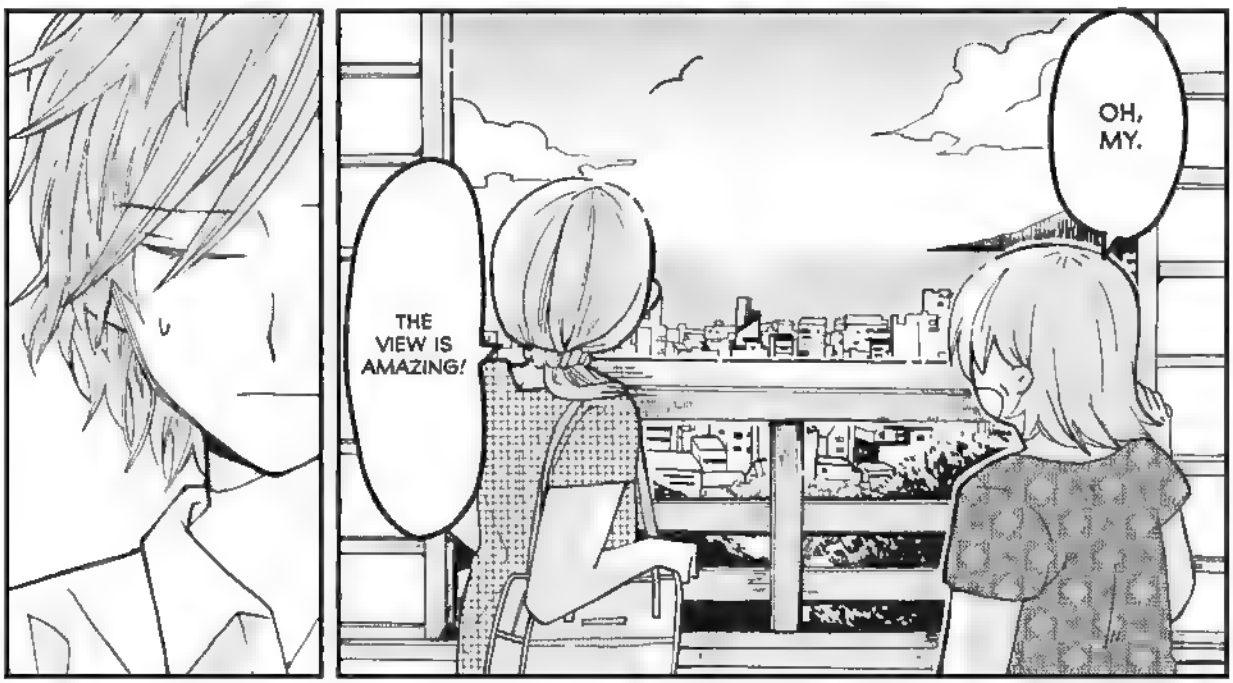
"WA..."

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE...

The end.

ATAMI
Chapter 14


THIS IS OUR COMPANY RETREAT.


THE VIEW IS AMAZING!
OH, MY.

WHY DID YOU COME?
ATAMI
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO FORCED ME TO PARTICIPATE, MAEKAWA.
THAT'S TRUE, BUT...
...
CHATTER
CHATTER
MAEKAWA...
IT'S ONLY NATURAL FOR HER TO BE ANGRY.

WELL, WE'D BOTH BE NAKED...
SERIOUS
真剣
SHOULD WE BATHE AT DIFFERENT TIMES?
HUH?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THE ONSEN?
WHAT'S WRONG?
SPLASH
I DIDN'T THINK SHE'D BE SO SERIOUS WHEN TALKING ABOUT THE ONSEN...
OH, CRAP!
I CAME ALL THIS WAY, SO I MIGHT AS WELL GET SOME REST AND RELAXATION!
SLAM

THOSE TWO ARE SO CLOSE.
ホホホ
HAHAHA
I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING...
I'M GOING TO SLIP AND FALL...
YOU LOST YOUR CONTACTS?
THEY CAME OUT WHEN I WAS WASHING MY HAIR.
I'M GLAD I BROUGHT A SPARE PAIR!
ANNND SHE'S BACK TO NORMAL.
PHEW...

I'M SURE YOU HAD YOUR REASONS FOR WHAT YOU SAID BEFORE.
WE'RE ON A TRIP, SO IT'S FINE.
ALSO...
YOU WON'T WORK ON YOUR STORYBOARD, RIGHT?
GRAB
I'M GETTING USED TO DEALING WITH YOU.
I THOUGHT YOU'D STILL BE SHOCKED...
WHAT'S WITH THAT FLIPPANT ATTITUDE?
HA HA HA

...
WOMEN'S
I'M FIXING YOUR YUKATA.
WHAT?
WE HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK PROPERLY.
I HATE YOU!
EVER SINCE THEN...
ARE YOU DONE FIXING IT YET?
...

MAKE SURE YOU DON'T DRINK TOO MUCH.
IT'S TIME FOR DINNER!
SHIMIZU-SAN, YOU...
H-HEY!
WAIT!
WHAT ABOUT THAT THING YOU SAID THE OTHER DAY?

HUH?
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS THINK OF ME FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!
DOES MAEKAWA...

BUT, WOULDN'T THAT BE A LITTLE TOO CONVENIENT? IT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY I WAS DISTRACTING HER FROM HER STORYBOARD, BUT, AM I JUST BEING CONCEITED?
WORRY
もんもん
...LIKE ME?!
IF THAT'S TRUE...

SIGH
THEN AREN'T MY FEELINGS RECIPROCATED?
NO WAY!
LET'S ALL SING TOGETHER!

HEY.
I'M EXHAUSTED.
スパ
WHOOSH
SO, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT?
HMM...
SHUT UP AND DON'T HOLD BACK.
ONSEN PING-PONG IS ALL ABOUT CONSIDERATION!

MISS
I FOUND SOMEONE I LIKE...
AND CONFESSED TO THEM.
SERIOUSLY?!
FINALLY, THE DAY HAS COME WHEN YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT ROMANCE!
H-HEY NOW...
ARE YOU GUYS GOING OUT? OR DID THEY TURN YOU DOWN?
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE I CONFESSED SO THAT WE COULD START DATING.

HMM.
AND HOW DID THEY RESPOND?
I THOUGHT THAT I NEEDED TO SAY THINGS OUT LOUD...
TO GET MY FEELINGS ACROSS.
APPARENTLY MY FEELINGS DON'T MATTER.
WOW...
WE ACT NORMALLY...
EVEN AFTER EVERYTHING.
I FEEL LIKE I'M NEEDED.
BUT I WAS HAPPY.

I SEE.
THEN WHAT ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT?
?
WELL, THIS IS JUST A "WHAT IF", BUT...
THAT'S ALL I WANTED.
IT MAKES ME ANXIOUS.
I THINK THEY MIGHT HAVE STARTED TO LIKE ME BACK.
IF I TRULY LIKE THEM...
I WONDER IF I CAN TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP.
AND CAN CONTINUE TO LIKE THEM.
I WONDER IF IT'D BE NORMAL FOR US TO DATE IF THEY DO.

BUT... ACTUALLY, I'M GETTING MARRIED.
OUR CIRCUM-STANCES ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...
WHAT?! TO WHO?
THE GIRLFREND I BROKE UP WITH.
WE BROKE UP BECAUSE I WASN'T CONFIDENT THAT I COULD SUPPORT A FAMILY...
BUT WE DECIDED TO GET BACK TOGETHER AFTER TALKING.
THAT SORT OF RESPON-SIBILITY ISN'T SOMETHING YOU CAN BEAR BY YOURSELF.
IT'S BETTER FOR YOU TO SHARE IT WITH YOUR PARTNER WHILE THINKING THINGS THROUGH.

NOT THAT THINGS GO SO SMOOTHLY IN REALITY!
HA HA HA
ANYWAY, YOU'RE WORRYING TOO MUCH EVEN THOUGH YOU TWO HAVEN'T STARTED DATING.
AFTER ALL, YOUR PARTNER IS THE PERSON YOU CHOSE TO BE WITH.
A PARTNER, HUH?
YEAH.
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
I THINK IT'S BEST FOR YOU TO STAY WITH THEM.
IF IT'S DUE TO THEIR INFLUENCE...
BUT I THINK YOU'VE CHANGED FOR THE BETTER.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR PARTNER IS LIKE...

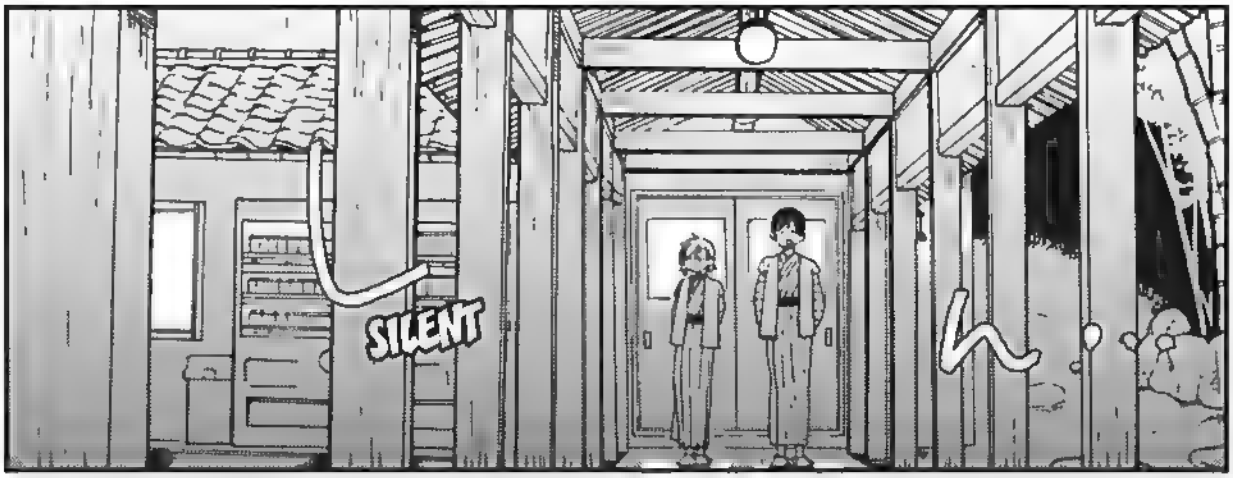
I HOPE THINGS GO WELL FOR YOU.
YEAH.
THE PERSON I LIKE SEEMS TO HAVE THINGS TOGETHER...
BUT THEY'RE ACTUALLY WEAK.
I WAS ATTRACTED TO THE WAY THEY WORK TOWARD THEIR GOALS...
DESPITE ALL THAT.

I WANT TO BE THERE...
WATCHING CLOSELY WHEN THEIR DREAM COMES TRUE.
EVEN LONGER, IF POSSIBLE...
KIDOGUCHI!
AH!
HEY, DON'T GET ALL MUSHY ON ME.
I'M HEADING BACK.

AND...
THANKS FOR ALL THIS.
CONGRATU-LATIONS ON GETTING MARRIED.
HMM?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE, MAEKAWA?

SEE YOU GUYS LATER.
OH, OKAY.
UM...
I JUST CAME TO GET SOME FRESH AIR.


SILENT

I THINK THEY'RE STARTING TO LIKE ME BACK...
EVEN LONGER, IF POSSIBLE...
WHAT SHOULD I DO? SHE OVERHEARD SOMETHING SO EMBARRASSING!
THIS IS BAD...

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU TALKED TO KIDOGUCHI-SAN ABOUT THAT SORT OF THING.
WELL, YEAH. HE'S THE EASIEST TO GET ADVICE FROM...
DID YOU HEAR US?
HEY, UM, YOU KNOW LISTENING IN ON PEOPLE ISN'T NICE...
HOW GREAT FOR HIM, GETTING MARRIED.
C-COME ON, LET'S GO BACK TO THE BANQUET HALL!

TREMBLE
ブルブル
S-SORRY.
WHY ARE YOU APOL-OGIZING?

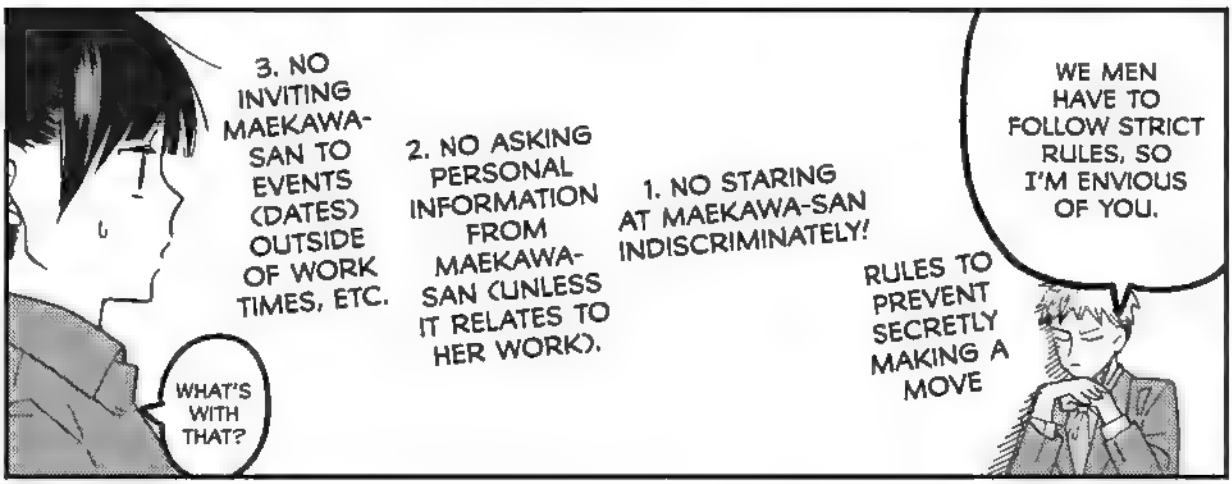
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT.
BECAUSE I SAID SOMETHING WEIRD.
WITHOUT GETTING TOO WORKED UP...
SHIMIZU-SAN...
HER HAND IS COLD.
IF WE COULD SHARE OUR THOUGHTS WITH EACH OTHER...
ギュ
SQUEEZE

Still Sick [2] The End

THE BONUS CHAPTER STARTS ON THE NEXT PAGE.
(IT TAKES PLACE A LITTLE AFTER CHAPTER 8.)

SHIMIZU-SAN, YOU DRIVE TO YOUR APPOINTMENTS WITH CLIENTS?
CAR RENTAL RECORDS
HEY, LET'S RENT A CAR AND GO ON A DRIVE!
ARE YOU SURE?
YEAH! IT'LL BE FINE!
THEY WERE GIVING OUT PENS, SO I TOOK A BUNCH!
YOU TOOK TOO MANY.
YEP! IF I DON'T DRIVE SOMETIMES, I'LL FORGET HOW TO!
I GUESS YOU CAN'T DRIVE OFTEN WHEN YOU DON'T OWN A CAR.

WHAT?
WHY DID YOU CALL FOR ME?
ARE YOU TWO GOING TO GET BUBBLE TEA TOGETHER, HMM?
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.
YOU SEEM TO BE ENJOYING THE TIME YOU SPEND WITH MAEKAWA-SAN.


3. NO INVITING MAEKAWA-SAN TO EVENTS (DATES) OUTSIDE OF WORK TIMES, ETC.
2. NO ASKING PERSONAL INFORMATION FROM MAEKAWA-SAN (UNLESS IT RELATES TO HER WORK).
1. NO STARING AT MAEKAWA-SAN INDISCRIMINATELY!
WHAT'S WITH THAT?
RULES TO PREVENT SECRETLY MAKING A MOVE
WE MEN HAVE TO FOLLOW STRICT RULES, SO I'M ENVIOUS OF YOU.

WHY DO YOU GET TO GO?
IT'S NOT FAIR!
BRING US BACK SOUVENIRS.
OH, RIGHT. MAEKAWA IS REALLY POPULAR.

FISH?
YOU TOLD ME TO PICK A PLACE TO GO.
I WANT TO EAT FISH.
DAY TRIPS IN KANTO DRIVING ROUTES
OH, IT DOES.
LOOK!
LOOK!
SEE? DOESN'T THIS LOOK GOOD?
WHAT IF SOME GUY HITS ON MAEKAWA?
GASP

LET'S GO!
IT'S TOO MUCH WORK.
SALMON ROE! SEA URCHINS! SQUID!
ACTUALLY, I DECIDED NOT TO GO.
SLUMP
WHAT?
YOU SHOULD WORK ON YOUR MANUSCRIPT.
HOW COULD YOU PLAY...
WITH THE FEELINGS OF SOMEONE WHO'S CRAVING FISH?
PLEASE DON'T ACT LIKE YOU'RE PLANNING ON TAKING ME OUT TO EAT UNLESS YOU MEAN IT!
I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE CAN SAY THAT WHEN SHE KISSED ME AS A JOKE...

*PLEASE REFER TO CHAPTER 3.

I CAN ALWAYS RELY ON YOUR FLYING CROSS CHOP WHEN THE TIMES COMES.

YAY!

DON'T EXPECT THINGS FROM OTHERS.

I SAID YOU WORRY TOO MUCH.

SHIMIZU-SAN, HAVE YOU EVER BEEN HIT ON?

NOPE.

NO STORIES FROM BACK WHEN YOU WERE POPULAR?

SUCH A TIME NEVER EXISTED.

I BET SHE'D BE MORE POPULAR IF SHE JUST KEPT QUIET...

♪ TAKE OFF! VROOOOM! LA LA LA LA... LA LA LA! ♪

(BGM FROM A RACING GAME)

ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT A STORY FROM WHEN I WAS POPULAR...
YOU THOUGHT OF SOMETHING?
OH, RIGHT.
WELCOME!
WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE, I WORKED PART-TIME AT A SMALL BOOKSTORE.
はっ
GASP
FLUSTER
そわそわ
FLUSTER
そわそわ
BEEP
ピ
?

PWOOSH
JUST WAIT A MINUTE! I'LL PUT IT IN A BAG WHERE YOU CAN'T SEE THE CONTENTS!
THAT'LL BE 620 YEN.
A YURI COM-RADE!
OUR LOVE GAME
OH, NO!
CHA-LING
AH...
SLIP
FLUSH
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT.

SQUEEZE
むぎゅ・・・
BOOKSTORE
HERE IS YOUR PURCHASE.
HEH
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO FLUSTERED.
MAYBE I SAID TOO MUCH.
I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE HER UNIFORM, SO MAYBE SHE DOESN'T LIVE AROUND HERE.
THUMBS UP
PLEASE COME AGAIN SOON!
ALSO, I LOVED THAT VOLUME.

BOOKSTORE
WE'VE ORDERED A COUPLE OTHER GOOD ONES!
I REALLY ENJOYED THE COMIC I BOUGHT LAST TIME!
SHE CAME!
HERE'S YOUR CHANGE.
WELCOME

PLEASE...
TAKE THIS!
THAT'S NOT IT!
WHAT?
TOSS
ぽい
RECEIPTS
OH, DID YOU NOT NEED YOUR RECEIPT?
HUH?!

AND THAT'S THE END.
...
パキ
SNAP
SHE STOPPED COMING AFTER THAT.
I SUPPOSE SO.
IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN HER CONTACT INFO OR A MESSAGE.
I DON'T THINK THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM.
SIGH はーぁ
IT'S SO HARD TO BE FRIENDS WITH GIRLS.
EVEN THOUGH I'D FINALLY FOUND SOMEONE WHO ENJOYED YURI, TOO...

I WONDER HOW MANY CHANCES AT ROMANCE SHIMIZU-SAN HAS UNKNOWINGLY THROWN IN THE TRASH UP UNTIL NOW...
WHO IS THAT?

ISN'T IT AN AMAZING COINCIDENCE?
WHAT?
THIS IS THE GIRL FROM THE BOOKSTORE I WAS JUST TELLING YOU ABOUT!
OH, MAEKAWA!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU RECOGNIZED ME.
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL!
I'M GOING TO GO CHECK OUT THE SOUVENIRS.
OH, I WANT TO BUY SOME, TOO.
WELL, I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN.

CHATTER
CHATTER
YOU HAVEN'T SEEN EACH OTHER IN YEARS, RIGHT?
YOU SHOULD SPEND MORE TIME TALKING WITH HER!
HUH? WAIT, REALLY?
UM...
WHAT?!
SHIMIZU-SAN, I USED TO LIKE YOU!

I FELT GUILTY WHEN I READ STORIES ABOUT GIRLS IN LOVE.
WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL...
I COULDN'T TELL ANYONE THAT I LIKED GIRLS.
ABOUT CHARACTERS WHO ARE ABLE TO FACE AND ACCEPT THEIR FEELINGS.
BUT YOU RECOMMENDED WONDERFUL STORIES TO ME...
YOU GAVE ME THE COURAGE I NEEDED.

VROOM
オォ…
MY GIRLFRIEND IS WAITING, SO I HAVE TO GO.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THAT!
YEAH, BUT IT'S IN PAST TENSE...
IN THE END, IT TURNS OUT YOU *WERE* POPULAR. GOOD FOR YOU.

HMM.
I'M JUST GLAD I WAS able TO SUPPORT HER AS A FELLOW YURI-LOVER.
I BET YOU WERE DISAPPOINTED TO FIND OUT THAT SHE HAD A GIRLFRIEND AFTER HEARING ALL THAT!
I-WASN'T INTERESTED!
DON'T MAKE FUN OF ME!
IN THAT CASE...

YOU SHOULD COMFORT ME.
WAIT...
SHIMIZU-SAN...

わはは!
HA HA HA
WERE YOU SURPRISED TO HAVE A TASTE OF YOUR OWN MEDICINE?
JUUUST KIDDING!
WHAT?
SHIMIZU-SAN, UM...
MY ICE CREAM...
べっとり
STICKY

AREN'T YOU LUCKY THAT THEY SOLD T-SHIRTS?
AHHH!
はぁ
SIGH
I GUESS I SHOULDN'T TRY TO STEP OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE...
WELL, SOMETHING GOOD WILL HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER!

Thank you for purchasing the second volume! There's a lot of confusion regarding the girls' relationship in this volume, but Maekawa's return to being a manga creator is just starting! Please look forward to the next volume.

Akashi

SPECIAL THANKS

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MY READERS, EVERYONE WHO HAS SENT ME MESSAGES OF SUPPORT AND COMMENTS REGARDING THEIR OPINIONS, MY EDITOR KOKUBA-SAMA, AND EVERYONE WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE PUBLICATION OF THIS MANGA FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART!

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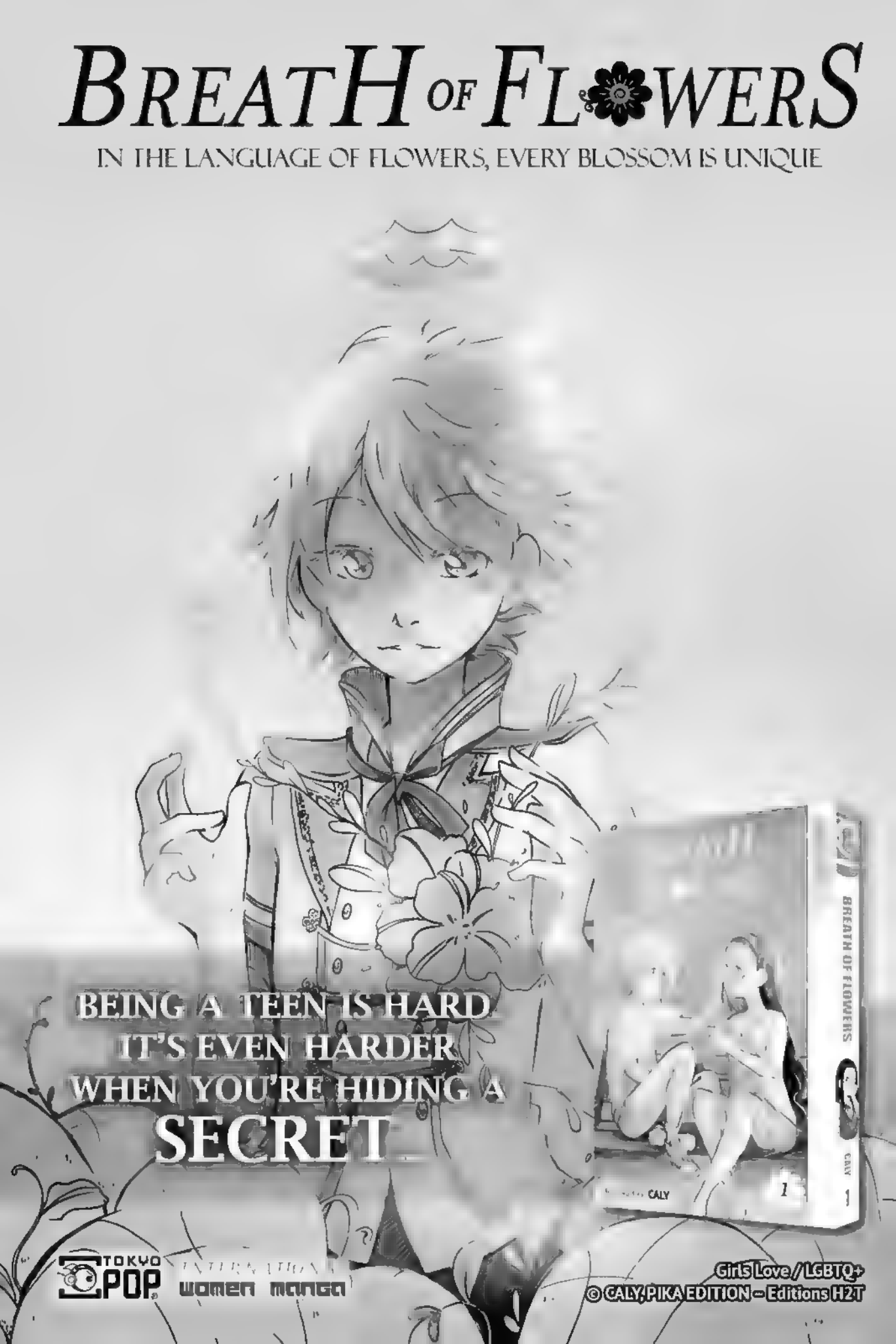

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STOP

THIS IS THE BACK OF THE BOOK!

How do you read manga-style? It's simple! Let's practice -- just start in the top right panel and follow the numbers below!

Crimson from ***Kamo*** / Fairy Cat from ***Grimms Manga Tales***
Morrey from ***Goldfisch*** / Princess Al from ***Princess Al***